

# THE ZEN ARTS

An Anthropological Study  
of the Culture of Aesthetic Form  
in Japan

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis has been composed by myself and the work is my own.

Signed .

Date 24<sup>th</sup> November 1998.....



## ABSTRACT

This thesis which was carried out with support from the Economic and Social Science Research Council (1992-1996) is an ethnographic and historical exploration of the 'Traditional Arts' in contemporary Japan. It is concerned primarily with a distinct group of the arts, linked historically and thematically with Zen Buddhism. This group comprises activities like the Tea Ceremony (*Chadō*) and Martial Arts (*Budō*). They are commonly described in the literature as 'religio-aesthetic' pursuits, which through bodily gesture and the creation of highly valued objects, express core spiritual values. Ideally the experience of practising the Zen arts culminates in 'Enlightenment' (*Satori*).

I have studied these claims firstly as part of a literary and intellectual history of representing Japanese Culture through the arts. This historical approach is an acknowledgement both of the ways in which the Zen arts have changed over time and that the emergence and development of the Zen arts as an object of intellectual inquiry and political considerations coincides with the start of the so called 'Modern' period (from 1868). The Zen arts became and remain a key metaphor in representations of Japanese Culture, as an internal 'Myth of Japanese Uniqueness' (cultural nationalism) and as part of an 'Oriental' (foreign) discourse. A significant part of this historical inquiry has also involved an examination of the role visual images and modern technologies have played in shaping perceptions of the Zen arts

Fieldwork was carried out in Japan over a two year period with the practical support of two institutions: St Catherines College (Oxford University) in the city of Kobe and the National Museum of Ethnology in the city of Osaka. I was actively involved at various sites, in the area around these two cities, practising the tea ceremony and one of the martial arts - Shorinji Kempo.

Based upon this experience, I argue that the Zen arts are best understood in terms of a dynamic relationship between an aesthetic discourse on art and culture and the social and embodied experiences of those who participate in them. Behind this relationship, and accounting both for the cultural representations and individual perceptions of the Zen arts is the mechanism of *Mimesis*, which I define as a theory of visible aesthetic forms. This research is a development of current anthropological interests in cultural representations as a visual genre (Banks & Morphy 1997) and contributes to the general study of visible cultural forms like art, material culture and the body.

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## Prologue

This thesis is about that community of individuals who practise a group of activities sometimes referred to in English as the 'Zen Arts', and addresses the idea, constructed in particular discourses, that these activities are aesthetic expressions of 'Japanese Culture'.

The phrase Zen Arts has no Japanese equivalent. The kinds of activities which the English phrase describes are diverse. They include the procedure for making and appreciating green tea, known as the 'Way of Tea' (*Chadō*); a highly stylised form of theatre (*Nō* drama); Calligraphy (*Shōdō*); and various fighting systems of 'Martial Ways' (*Budō*). When studied historically or approached from an anthropological perspective, through fieldwork, they cannot be regarded exclusively as expressions of Zen philosophy or as 'Art' (*geijitsu/geidō*). But it is still possible and useful to talk of these activities as 'Zen Arts' for two reasons. Firstly, they are recognisable by certain institutional features, social practices and above all the aesthetic values which are attached to their actions and objects. These properties do not by themselves define the Zen arts, not if we are sensitive to the subjective perceptions of their practitioners which vary and change, but they do substantiate a common idea about the Zen arts. This idea, that art forms are an aesthetic form and representation of Japanese Culture is the fundamental point of agreement shared by practitioners and non-practitioners alike, and is particularly evident in the recent history and current perception of these activities.

In this thesis I shall trace and describe both the practical reality and the history of the aesthetic ideal in two of the Zen arts: the 'Way of Tea', *Chadō*, and one of the 'Martial Ways', *Budō*, known as *Shorinji Kempo* ('Fist Way of the Shaolin Temple'). The historical origins of *Chadō* as a simple beverage for revitalising tired Buddhist monks, and of the *Budō* as methods of mortal combat, reflect a functional aspect to these activities which has long since been superseded by other concerns. Both of

these activities are now performing arts, for the refinement and expression of aesthetic sensibilities.

They demand long-term physical dedication, requiring the practitioner to learn and master a large repertoire of technical movement that would be unnecessary if they were simply about 'making tea' or 'unarmed combat'. There are special kinds of places used for performance, and prescribed ways of conducting oneself with others in these spaces which every practitioner must observe. The practitioner who recognises and masters all this, it is said, expresses clearly defined aesthetic qualities through these skills.

To talk of the Zen arts in terms of aesthetics ultimately means addressing the question as to whether they constitute Art itself. In the appreciation of the physical properties of movement, objects, spaces and a code of behaviour, we can certainly identify a register of aesthetic values. But, like Brian Moeran in his anthropological study of Japanese folk art potters (1997) I wish to avoid questions about the philosophy of aesthetics and definitions of art, and, following Arthur Danto and Howard Becker, speak instead of an 'Art World' (Moeran 1997: 7). This is to include the embodied and 'social processes' by which the Zen arts are 'produced, distributed, marketed, appreciated, interpreted and discussed' as aesthetic forms. (ibid, 5.)

I am using the term aesthetics in two ways<sup>1</sup>: to refer to (i) an embodied and social activity and (ii) a body of doctrine. Making the ambivalence of the term aesthetics central to this inquiry allow us to address the two fundamental paradoxes of the Zen arts.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, how it is that such disciplined and disciplining activities can produce the introspection and 'pure' experience reiterated in most of the Zen arts' literature, and particularly its autobiographical accounts. Secondly, that interpretations of the Zen arts in terms of their ritual and aesthetic structure tend to obscure much of the

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<sup>1</sup> I shall also use aesthetics in its post-modern sense to refer to the dissolution of the distinction of 'High' and 'Low' Culture and what is called the 'aestheticisation of everyday life'.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, from this point I shall use 'aesthetics' to refer to a body of doctrine.

practical nature of participants' own experience, but is nevertheless consistently reproduced by them in response to anthropological investigations such as this.

Every ethnography depends in some form on the authority of 'participant observation', and I want to begin by foregrounding my own, solely in order to demonstrate its partiality. Identifying and exploring the subjectivities of participation is the only way to account for the paradox of discipline and freedom from constraints which is at the heart of the aestheticism of the Zen arts. For if practitioners typically perceive their participation sensorially and socially (as I have done), which is also to say in varied and changing ways, but continue to reproduce a culture of aesthetic form then, it would suggest that this is where the authority to represent the Zen arts is located. I shall argue that the authority of descriptions and explanations of the Zen arts rests on the evocation and reproduction of an aesthetic ideal as the major focus of authenticity.

My own relationship with the two activities, *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo*, has undergone significant transformations just as my role and the circumstances of my practice have changed, but has always been more than academic. As a student and teacher, teenager and adult, in both Japan and Britain my experiences have encompassed a wide range of relationships between one particular individual (myself) and an aesthetic discourse. Being a practitioner of *Shorinji Kempo*, and becoming a practitioner of *Chadō* during the fieldwork for this thesis, has involved negotiating and re-negotiating, within a community of other practitioners, a large repertoire of physical movement, visual symbols, new and familiar spaces and objects.

The actions and procedure of *Chadō* and the dimensions of the 'tea room' (*chashitsu*) were largely new to me and I was unprepared for its rigour and detail. Most of the technical demands are upon the 'host' whose role it is to prepare a mixture of green powdered tea and then serve it graciously to each of the three or four assembled guests, using utensils specially crafted for the purpose. The host is also responsible for choosing and preparing all the utensils to be used and tidying

them away afterwards. The tea room is arranged so that all the necessary equipment is within reach of the host and can be minutely appreciated. With so little space available, every movement and gesture is intensified and assumes particular significance.

There are slightly different methods of preparing and appreciating tea, depending on the occasion and skill of participants, but the usual procedure takes between forty minutes and one hour. This is a long time to be sitting still and concentrating on one activity, but discomfort can be offset by the opportunity to get to know other participants. The longer I took part and the more my skill improved, the greater was the potential for constructive interaction with my environment and the others in it. This was my own most valued experience of participation, and I surmised also that of my co-participants as well. Although I never achieved the skill and familiarity with *Chadō* that I have in *Shorinji Kempo* as a practitioner of almost sixteen years, I recognised many of the same kinds of social and sensory processes at work.

*Shorinji Kempo* is one of the 'Martial Ways', *Budō*, and as such a great deal more energetic than *Chadō*. It is a fighting system and physical regime which combines 'hard' (strikes) and 'soft' (throws) fighting techniques practised together with a partner. But the aim, as in *Chadō*, is on the refinement and execution of physical forms as an aesthetic activity; *Shorinji Kempo*, in this sense, is not a form of combat but a 'skill' (*Waza*).

I had already achieved a certain level of skill in *Shorinji Kempo*, so practising its repertoire of technique was a process of re-negotiating familiar movements and superimposing new knowledge upon past experience, rather than learning everything anew. But whilst this technical ability did constitute a type of bodily 'language' for aesthetic expression it was an imprecise mechanism for communication with others. It was the basis for a kind of relationship with others that was not possible as a new student of *Chadō*, but success at the aesthetic level was not mirrored at the social and embodied level. It was and is the ambiguous nature of the relationship between my practising certain aesthetic forms and the embodied and social experiences which



arose from it that led to this inquiry. By making my own aesthetic explicit, I want to start out explicitly as a participant but also to displace the authority of the aesthetic doctrine.

It is unnecessary for me to relate a full-length autobiography of my participation in the Zen arts, but as Ruth Behar has pointed out, an inquiry such as this where the author is more than an interested observer or short term participant: 'does require a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the world and, more particularly, the topic being studied.' This 'exposure' should 'take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to' and not be 'a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake' (1996: 13-14).

My personal history of participation in the Zen arts is both peculiarly my own and at the same time bound up in an aesthetic history of the kinds of relationships I have experienced. I do not want to emphasise my experience of 'being there and doing it' as a source of authority. My experiences are significant because like those of other practitioners whom I know, they reflect a subjective and changing relationship to an aesthetic discourse. There are motivations and intentions that I perceive in myself and others through the lived experience of practice which cannot be accounted for by aesthetic appearances. But the social perceptions and 'everyday' intentions are, I shall argue, no more or less 'authentic' than discursive appearances. The implication of the concept of authenticity, that there is a deeper truer meaning lying behind discourse, is misleading. In this respect, practitioners of the Zen arts are interesting not only because they are skilful at expressing an aesthetic discourse, but also because they are people.

This ethnography, then, is not about discovering new facts, or more accurate 'truths'. There is no lengthy description of the 'ritual' or 'symbolism' of the 'Zen arts'. This ethnography is about the whole problem of identifying an 'essence' of 'Japanese Culture' in the aestheticism of the Zen arts. Practitioner's identities and discourse are mixed up with and expressed in and through each other. Individuals adapt aspects of these discourses to themselves and at the same time are changed by them.

The danger of privileging aesthetic appearances is a confusion of representative outer form with inner states of being. This may result in the imputation of certain kinds of intentions to those who practise. It is also to diminish the value of those experiences which are not in aesthetic terms 'authentic'. The misconception that individuals are motivated to practise the Zen arts by notions of Cultural difference is, as we shall see, the legacy of historical movements concerned with the aesthetic imagination. But without this imagination, many of us who practise might not be there at all, or at least not remain so enchanted by the edifying possibilities of practice.

This ethnography, in looking at how representations of the Zen arts and identities of practitioners are expressed 'performatively' through the body, is one of encounters. An understanding of the kinds of identities which are created out of the dynamic, changing relationship between practices and discourse begins and ends with an 'autobiography' of my own relationship.

An 'autobiographical' approach is important here because it encourages an exploration of the relational aspects of fieldwork. It is an approach which highlights the localised character of the Zen arts, by focusing on the social and embodied experiences of practitioners in particular contexts. The problem in an ethnography of performative encounters is that it may end up as an 'exhibitive' pose (Okely 1992: 2).

This 'exhibitive' pose is a feature of most personal accounts of training in the Zen arts. It is clearly illustrated in the many training 'diaries' which through the liberal use of photographs often double as technical guides. The use of photographs is one way of overcoming the need for a phenomenological description of the physical process. But an over-reliance on a visual mode of description dislocates the performance not only from its context but also from the sensate experience of the performer. These kinds of 'accounts' can border on the 'narcissistic' in the sense of 'self-adoration' and offer little insight into the 'self-awareness' of the performer as a person, not just a participant (ibid: 2).



A very different kind of account, which also avoids 'self-conscious' (Cohen 1994) reflection is comprised by the small body of anthropological works on the Zen arts. These provide historical information and detail about 'ritual' form, but until recently made little attempt to include a more self-reflexive perspective. As one commentator has written about their participation in *Chadō*: 'I see no logic in jeopardising my relationship with informants expounding on behaviours which might be perceived as deviant when the norm has yet to be established in the professional literature...I feel no intellectual imperative to discuss flaws in this system' (Anderson 1987: 476).

There are both ethical and theoretical issues at stake here. I acknowledge, with Anderson, that there are limits to the extent to which 'informants' can be treated as 'intellectual capital', particularly as, like her, I have ongoing and significant relationships with my fellow participants. But the theoretical problem is that all we know about Anderson's relationship is defined by the need to establish a 'norm' or 'Ideal' type. Even if we do not know about 'deviant' behaviour on the part of 'informants' there is an 'autobiographical' gap here which I suggest needs addressing because 'the personal is theoretical' (Okely 1992: 9).

The 'personal' can also be self-indulgent and many of the more 'literary' accounts of training in the Zen arts are characterised by a strong, linear, sometimes 'heroic' narrative. Typically, the subject progresses from a physically weakened or deprived state through a series of physically and 'spiritually' challenging encounters that conclude with the special kind of knowledge or 'insight' that accompanies the mastery of aesthetic form.

Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of modern *karate-dō*, ('Way of the Empty hand') describes his life almost metaphorically as a spiritual journey, or 'Way' (*Dō'Michi*) which leads the subject through a series of demanding and enlightening encounters. I do not question the truthfulness or the sincerity of his account, only its literary structure, which reflects a journey of hardships and privations from 'impoverished Okinawan youth' to a performance of *Karate* in the imperial presence (Funakoshi 1975: 187). Collectively, the life-stories of the founders of the modern martial ways

have had a significant effect on the manner in which foreigners describe their experiences. An account by one such foreigner of the physical hardships endured in *Karate* training, draws on the notion of 'Tradition' to make sense of the experience: 'Sensei ('Teacher') was keeping us in the tradition of the true martial arts in order to develop the strength of our spirits by forging them in the same fires as the Samurai of old' (Morris 1992: 36). Even introspective episodes in these accounts tend to take the tradition as their frame of reference, using anecdote and analogy rather than self-reflective experiences.

The autobiography of Sōshitsu Sen XV, grandmaster of the '*Urasenke*' school of Tea (1979) is typical of this genre: 'Whenever I recall my arduous Rinzaï Zen<sup>3</sup> training under Goto Roshi, two of my teachers oft - repeated sayings come to mind: 'Become the ink stone that does not wear away no matter how many times it is rubbed' and 'Demand and then avidly seek to know' (Sōshitsu Sen 1979: 22-23). These are powerful and evocative sayings which disclose aspects of the relationship between Goto Rishi and Sen. But the use of these sayings to express that relationship and that experience reflects a particular genre.

One book that stands out as a reflexive account of the actual process of training in one of the Zen arts - 'Archery' (*Kyūdō*), is Eugene Herrigel's '*Zen in the art of archery*' (1953). This is Herrigel describing the 'right shot': 'Outwardly for the observer, the right shot is distinguished by the cushioning of the right hand as it is jerked back, so that no tremor runs through the body. ... But inwardly for the archer himself, right shots have the effect of making him feel that the day has just begun' (Herrigel 1953: 75). Whilst there are insightful descriptions like this of the embodied experience of training in Herrigel's account, their interpretation is bound up with an Orientalist logic: 'The effortlessness of a performance for which great strength is needed is a spectacle of whose aesthetic beauty the East has an exceedingly sensitive and grateful appreciation' (ibid 1953: 42). The kind of relationship Herrigel had with his object of study is clearly articulated, but for the purposes of this

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<sup>3</sup> Rinzaï Zen is one of the two main schools of Zen Buddhism in Japan and emphasises the practice of Kōan or philosophical sayings as a means to spiritual development.

investigation unself-critical of its assumptions. The result is that Herrigel's account reinforces an Orientalist 'idea' of Japanese Culture as in essence aesthetic.

There are various genres of 'autobiography' among accounts of the Zen arts, only some of which I have examined above. The literary conventions and structures which can be identified in these versions of the Zen arts are intended not as criticism, but as a contextualisation of my own approach.

A previous attempt to examine my own relationship with *Shorinji Kempo* resulted in a theoretical analysis of the institutional mechanics and symbolic forms of this Martial way. I was writing 'against' what I perceived as a self-indulgent and 'exhibitive' posture in existing accounts. On completion, I was satisfied that I had avoided the often intensely personal and mystifying accounts which typify the literature. Unwittingly, though, in the search for intellectualism and order, I had ended up divorcing myself and indeed anybody else from the account. The difficulty lay in finding a way to describe the active embodied process of training as both a projection of aesthetic 'form' and as a more intangible 'inner' experience. My field-notes provided plenty of detail about the people I have encountered and the circumstances under which we have trained. What these notes lacked was a sense of the embodied nature of my experience and these relationships. I became aware of the possibilities for this kind of description only when I looked at notes I had made separately, regarding the purely technical aspects of practice. These 'technical' notes were, I realised, also a record of the relationships I had with other performers and with certain aspects of aesthetic discourse, that is, as social and sensate experiences. Central to this kind of account is a view of the body as a medium not only for the performance of prescribed ritual gesture and the representation of aesthetic quality but also (and at the same time) for the communication of personal aesthetic 'Thoughts' and feelings (Strathern 1996). But the body is not a precise media for communication and as we shall see in chapter three, one can only guess from experience at the relationship between embodied feeling and meaning.

There are limits, therefore, to how far this kind of writing strategy can go as a form of explanation, but the opportunities it provides for an insight into the phenomenological core of meaning are significant: 'A more sensual gaze will not enable us to see what the other sees, but it will produce texts that correspond more closely to the experiences and perception of the ethnographic other' (Stoller quoted in Cohen 1992: 351).

What lies behind my concerns for 'experience' and the 'sensual gaze' is not purely theoretical. The relationship I have had to the Zen arts has always been active and partisan. My participation in one of the Zen arts, the Martial Way *Shorinji Kempo* is not limited to this investigation. I am aware that my intentions and motivations have changed and ranged widely as I have taken on new roles and responsibilities; such as 'Teacher' (*sensei*) and most recently 'Anthropologist'. I have experienced similarly variant and shifting understandings among my fellow participants, not only in Britain but also in Japan. It is these experiences that have led me to question the dogmatic and singular vision of so many accounts of the Zen arts.

During the research for this thesis I was practising *Shorinji Kempo* as an experienced performer. Fieldwork in *Shorinji Kempo* was a process of foregrounding this relationship so as to question the conditions of 'knowing' and 'being' a practitioner. In practical terms this involved being aware of and sensitive to the ways in which I and my fellow practitioners responded to each other over a sustained period of training. My relationship with *Chadō* was quite different. I came to practice with very little experience and my ineptitude and self-consciousness in a very unfamiliar environment from *Shorinji Kempo* lent a different quality to my relationships. Here, I was not able to create forms with aesthetic value, but it was still possible to communicate with others through performance, in spite of my lack of skill.

Fieldwork for this thesis therefore involved less a process of engagement than 're-engagement' in order to articulate what was familiar and in some sense 'known' but had not been viewed through my newly acquired anthropological 'lens' (Peacock 1986). At one level, it was a matter of being aware that my encounters with others

were constrained but not defined by roles like 'Teacher' or 'Guest' and contexts like a temple in Kyōto<sup>4</sup> city or a culture centre in Kobe.<sup>4</sup> But at the core of my experiences with others, and of our relationships with each other, was embodied and social performance.

I want to be careful here about suggesting that greater skill in action leads to a more understanding relationship with others. This is sometimes the case, and for myself and other practitioners it is the social bond between us, created through shared experiences, that is often the most important. What is certain is that with increased competence, the terms of the relationship changes and different possibilities for understanding and indeed misunderstanding emerge.

Having achieved a certain skill in *Shorinji Kempo* it is very difficult to explain to others what is going on in anything other than the terms and values of the discipline. One master of *Chadō* told me whilst I struggled to remember even the order of the actions: 'After seven years of regular practice you may gain an initial insight'. Statements like this are one reason why literary and other representations of the Zen arts tend to reproduce particular aesthetic genres and tropes. This enquiry, which focuses on the conditions of and for aestheticism in the Zen arts requires that one puts aside what one knows in order to discover how it is 'I' know. I have taken my own relationship as a starting point of the ethnography which follows, recognising that as an active participant I am never absent from the people and places I write about. By making my own relationship explicit and problematic I hope to overcome the problem of shifting the authorship of 'others' identities from aesthetic discourse to the ethnographer.

The chapter which follows links the aestheticism of the Zen arts with an 'idea and an ideal of Japan', as it appears in the Western imagination. The purpose is to show what kinds of activities and aesthetic forms have consistently informed the construction of 'Japan' and 'Japanese Culture' in the consciousness of foreigners,

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<sup>4</sup> Two cities in the Kansai region of Japan.

and how similar they were to the debates about and construction of a national/cultural identity by the Japanese themselves.

In chapter two I shall describe a history of the Zen arts, outlining its most distinctive structural and philosophical features and in particular tracing the development of two themes, the aesthetic and the ascetic. Essentially, this chapter will provide the background for the ethnographic content of this thesis which follows in the next four chapters.

Chapter three concentrates on the embodied and sensory nature of the Zen arts as part of an exploration of the relationship between discourse and practice. In particular, I ask what is the connection between aesthetic form and experience. The next chapter continues to address the same issues and suggests that the logic and central dynamic of aestheticism in the Zen arts is the logic of mimesis. My use of this concept is an attempt to account for the imitative aspect of performance as practitioners 'copy' forms, without denying creativity or agency. Finally, I ask how the relationship and perception of practitioners to aesthetic form may be affected by the introduction of new media, like pictures, video and computer graphics for visualising and learning technique.

In chapters five and six the focus shifts from the active body to social context. The change of emphasis is from the 'idea' of the Zen arts (and of 'Japan') as it is manifested through a register of aesthetics to the social and spatial aspects of performance. There are strict 'codes of conduct' (*Reigi*) and structures of authority (*Iemoto*) which 'frame' performance in the Zen arts. These chapters will be a description of the ways in which these codes and structures are variously manifested in space (e.g. as 'culture centres') and refashioned by individuals in practice. Issues of age, gender and occupation are significant indices here, displacing and affirming the power and authority of an aesthetic tradition.

The reinvention and perpetuation of that tradition through its 'Ideological dispositions and commercial affiliations' is the subject of chapter seven. It is an



examination of the Japanese intellectual movements and commercial interests which in the 'modern' period fashioned an idea of Japan as aesthetic. Using examples from both *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo*, I will show how this idea is substantiated, but at the same time undermined by mass cultural media forms like cinema, television and advertising.

In the final chapter, I am concerned with authenticity in the Zen arts and where, if not in a register of aesthetics it is located. This chapter will focus on *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo* as they are performed in three very different contexts: an international airport in Japan, a 'culture centre' in Osaka city and a sports hall in Edinburgh, Scotland. If the aesthetic value of the Zen arts can be expressed in public, local and international arenas, is its authenticity and integrity as a cultural document 'cracked'? Or, can the aesthetic ambiguity at the core of the Zen arts accommodate the desire among contemporary practitioners to recapture a vanishing Japanese past, a utopian space away from modern urban life, or as members in Scotland might say, just to 'have the crack'? I conclude by suggesting that it is the mechanism of mimesis which resolves these ambiguities and contradictions making authenticity always a cultural choice.

## Chapter 1

### Orientalism: An idea and an ideal of Japan

‘The Japanese are, to the highest degree, both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, rigid and adaptable, submissive and resentful of being pushed around, loyal and treacherous, brave and timid, conservative and hospitable to new ways.’ R. Benedict, *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946: 2).

The views expressed above about the Japanese are forthright, perhaps even presumptuous; this is how ‘The Japanese are’.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps surprising then that in the fifty years or so since Ruth Benedict’s book *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* was first published her comments continue to have impact on popular and academic perceptions of Japan.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of a dual and contradictory nature to the Japanese has a much wider currency than its expression in Benedict’s anthropological study. It is part of a discourse which has conveyed Japanese images, texts, objects and practices, mostly of aesthetic value, in different historical periods. At the time when Benedict’s book became popular in Japan (from the 1970’s), this discourse was known as *Nihonjinron* or ‘Theories of Japaneseness’.

When I went to work on this thesis I was presented with a copy of Benedict’s book by the Japanese woman instructing me in the ‘Way of Tea’ (*Chadō*). ‘If I wanted to find out ‘Who the Japanese really are’ she said, then the answer lay between these pages. This gift was more than an act of kindness or a response to my stated anthropological interests. The teacher had read Benedict’s book long before my arrival, but was also aware of its central ideas from other ‘native’ sources. What was

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<sup>1</sup> This is also an interesting variation on the use of binary oppositions. The Japanese are negated by the oppositions into becoming absolutely nothing at all.

<sup>2</sup> At a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 1996 Ruth Benedict’s book was the subject for a special session.



it then that gave the book and its views about the culture of Japan such status as an anthropology of and for the Japanese?

Two distinctive trends emerge from her book which have remained influential in much of the post-war anthropological writing in Japan: a 'holistic' approach to the Japanese and a 'pragmatism' which is reflected in the explanatory nature of her writing (Moeran 1990: 342). When these two trends are combined with a conception of Culture as determining and learned then contradictory dual features like those mentioned above become the expression of 'Japanese habits of thought and emotion' (Benedict 1967: 4). It is an 'idea' of Japan as an observable, ordered, totality, within which specific features like the 'militaristic and the aesthetic' can represent modes of being Japanese. It is also an idea connected to a much wider movement, whereby not only Japan but the 'Orient' is understood as both alien and threatening on the one hand and romantic, exotic and beautiful on the other. Otherwise known as 'Orientalism' after Edward Said's thesis (1978), what we are talking about here is what J.J. Clarke has called 'an identifiable family of intellectual attitudes and practices' (Clarke 1997: 10). Orientalism is a product and a legacy of the contact between foreigners and the 'East'. In Japan, this contact only really began to have a noticeable effect on the construction of an idea of Japan during the so-called 'Modern period' (after 1868). For two centuries prior to this, very few foreigners had access to Japan and their impact, even if presently underestimated, was still slight.

It is really impossible to think about the Western fascination with Japan and the highly imaginative and colourful construction of its image, without linking it to the modern period. Particular to this period is the visualisation of Japan by the highlighting of its artistic pursuits and aesthetic values. Some of the most powerful ideas about Japan and the Japanese, such as those we find expressed in the Zen arts, are tied to the aesthetic qualities of their visual imagery. I am using the word 'idea' as vision, drawing on its derivation from the Greek verb meaning 'to see' (Mitchell 1986). This visual symbolism of Japan is powerfully evoked in the graphic title of Benedict's book *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. The Zen arts have been recurring icons of a national

and cultural identity in the history of both Japanese and Western representations of Japan. It is this representative aspect I want to stress here, the relationship sometimes presumed to exist between these activities and aesthetic/ascetic modes of being.

Within the strict terms of Benedict's thesis, those who practise the Zen arts do so as 'Japanese' first and as individuals a distant second. Their performances are to be understood as expressions of innate national characteristics, like the aesthetic and ascetic modes of being. Individual intentions are reduced to a reflex of Cultural forces. It is a view of the Zen arts which has emotive power and popular support and cannot be dismissed because the theories which substantiate it run contrary to prevailing intellectual trends. I do not intend to argue that views like these are 'wrong', per se, rather that they have simplified the historical complexities of the Zen arts and made being a practitioner an object of aestheticism. They select and locate the source of value in aesthetic forms, and by reifying these phenomena in a specialist vocabulary they abstract the Zen arts from the context and experiences of those who practice.

What goes unquestioned are the 'conditions', the powerful yet invisible epistemological order that seems to make possible a given type of discourse about Japan and by which the Zen arts can be fashioned as 'an epitome of Japanese civilisation' (Sadler 1962: vii). How is it that practising the Zen arts can become a representation of Japanese aestheticism and asceticism? What are the assumptions by which ways of seeing 'Japan' can become ways of being Japanese? Central to these questions is the relationship between performer and phenomena, which I shall argue is not possible to explore as a detached observer, privileging the visual aspects of 'form', or the lexical definition of the aesthetic terms, but only as an engaged participant. That exploration is the ethnographic aspect of this thesis. But before that can take place there needs to be a critical discussion about the origins and consequences of representations and the exoticist imagination that evoke assumptions about Japanese Culture, about the Zen arts and those who engage with them. Such a discussion is premised on the notion that any system of cultural representations is (a)

‘Something made or fashioned’ and (b) pervaded by ‘Literary processes - metaphor, figuration, narrative’ (Clifford & Marcus 1986).

Acknowledging this, I will begin by identifying and examining the aesthetic and ascetic modes of being as enduring ‘topoi’ within a history of representing Japan. This is also a history of the relationship between Japan and the West, because these representations are emergent from contact with Japan as a foreign and exotic ‘Other’. The focus here is a ‘topography’ of Japaneseness created by foreigners rather than an explication of indigenous constructions. The points of contact between these two discourses are important and will become clearer later in this chapter. The aesthetic topos is a theme in the earliest accounts by foreigners returning from Japan in the sixteenth century and recurs in almost all of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Western representations of Japan. The Portuguese Jesuit missionary known as ‘Rodrigues the Interpreter’ (Cooper 1994) reserved his most sympathetic understanding of Japan for a description of the ‘way of tea’. In his writings he carefully and reverentially notes the importance of ‘aesthetic discernment’ in *Chadō* and how it is a particular vocabulary of terms ‘which indicate the presence or absence of this ability’ (ibid: 311). He also repeatedly mentions the desire among Japanese for an ascetic, ‘eremetical’ way of life as part of this Japanese aestheticism. The idealism and enthusiasm of Rodrigues for Japanese aestheticism which he describes as a characteristic of all Japanese cultural life is repeated in much of the scholarly work which followed.

The three most influential scholars of the last one hundred years, Basil Hall Chamberlain, George B. Sansom and Edwin O. Reischauer all emphasise aestheticism and artistic values as essential aspects of the Japanese character. Although Sansom and Reischauer are sensitive to the problems of ethnocentricity their work invokes a particular ‘idea’ of Japan. Sansom in *Japan - A Short Cultural History*, writes that, ‘the Japanese, whether by instinct or by tradition, have always had a thirst for beauty of colour and form’, but later concedes ‘we must beware, in discussing the arts as

well as the manners of a foreign country lest we stress their fortuitous strangeness and forget their essential identity' (Sansom 1931: 371,384).

There is no such equivocation in the comments of Charles A. Moore writing in the editor's supplement titled the 'Aesthetic' at the back of a book: *the Japanese Mind* (1967). It is worth quoting from this section at length because it typifies the attitude of most commentators at the time and many of those involved in the Zen arts today:

'So important is the aesthetic in Japanese culture that it has been accepted by many students of Japan as the outstanding positive characteristic of Japanese culture as a whole - as of the very essence of Japanese life. In comparison with other cultures, the aesthetic has been considered to be the essentially unique expression of spirituality in Japan, as is ethics in China, religion in India, and, possibly, reason in the West. Their love of beauty; their extreme and seemingly universal love of nature; their attempt to express beauty in all aspects of life (the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, gardens etc.); the spirit and fact (or, at least ideal) of harmony in philosophy, in religion, and in the social and political order; their obvious emphasis upon feeling and emotion; their all-pervading romanticism; and, possibly the "feminine" characterization that is so often cited - these are all well known and accepted as characteristic' (Moore 1967: 296-297).

The aesthetic/artistic topos is also evident in the works of early popular writers on Japan, like Lafcadio Hearn, Rudyard Kipling and Ernest Satow. In their writings, the Japanese 'are not just figures in a work of art, they are themselves artists, super-sensitive to the aesthetic resonances of everything around them' (Littlewood 1996: 66). This fascination with the artistic nature of the Japanese was nurtured by art collectors like Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) and Emile Guimet (1836-1918) who were in the first wave of visitors to Japan after it opened up to the West in the middle of the nineteenth century. Guimet's interests were largely ethnographic, and he amassed a huge collection of religious (chiefly Buddhist artefacts). But Fenollosa who arrived in Japan two years after Guimet in 1878, was more concerned with the aesthetic qualities of Japanese art and its implications for developments taking place in

Europe (Guth 1993: 111). As Moeran has indicated, as early as the middle of the eighteenth century art critics like Christopher Dresser, Sir George Birdwood and Walter Crane were looking to the artistic pursuits of places like Japan for aesthetic inspiration (1997: 221). This 'taste for things Japanese' became known as *Japonisme* and should be understood as: 'an ongoing and long-term discourse between east and west about the meaning of modernity' which sought to 'break down the distinction between arts and crafts (by whatever name); and to introduce, through simplicity, a new criterion of taste' (Moeran 1997: 221).<sup>3</sup> There was a considerable exchange of ideas between intellectuals, artists and literati in Japan and Europe during this period, part of the 'Romantic movement' which sought to address concerns about modernisation, and I shall discuss them more fully in chapter seven. The important point here is that the 'Cult of Japan' in Europe not only led to new artistic developments, it also had a profound effect on the whole idea of Japan and the Japanese. In 1898, Percival Lowell could write of the Japanese in '*The Soul of the Far East*': 'Artistic perception is with him [the Japanese artist] an instinct to which he intuitively conforms ... this perception of beauty is as keen as his comprehension of the common is crude, for while with science he has not even a speaking acquaintance, with art he is on terms of the most affectionate intimacy' (quoted in Guth 1993: 165).

This idea of Japan was most popularly realised as a series of popular images in Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysantheme*, better known in its later imitation as Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. The impact of this story on Western attitudes and opinions towards Japan lay less in its plot than in its exotic style and picturesque imagery. In the absence of alternatives to this kind of representation, 'Japanese Culture' is reduced or refined to the aestheticism of objects like fans, lanterns, toys and to caricatures of subservient serving women in kimonos.

The persistence and seduction of these images is evident later in popular American films like: *Tea House of the August Moon* and *Sayonara*. The film *Sayonara* was one

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<sup>3</sup> Siegfried Bing is credited with having created '*Japonisme*' when he started the magazine *Le Japon artistique* in the 1880's.

of the first positive cinematic representation of Japan in the post-war period. But almost the only Japanese to speak as characters in the film are women, who in their seduction by American servicemen, engender a respect for Japan by virtue of their artistic abilities and natural aestheticism. The Japanese lover of the central character in the film (played by Marlon Brando), is a performer with a famous theatre troupe; and their trysts take place whilst watching classical theatre, or appreciating tea together. This association of 'Japan' with women practising *Chadō* continues today. Newspaper discussion (Independent 31/1/97) about the possible suspension of the Japanese car manufacturer *Toyota's* investment in the United Kingdom has centred on the cultural 'ties' which bind these two nations together. In one article, a picture of a Japanese woman wearing a kimono and performing *Chadō* is juxtaposed with a picture of a provincial British tea room. A common appreciation of tea, it is suggested, provides 'a sentimental, but genuine sense of affinity with the British as a race, another tea drinking people'. In '*Zen on Wheels*', a television documentary made in Japan but commissioned by British 'Channel Four' and shown in 1998, the imagery is equally suggestive. In one sequence, camera shots of Japanese car manufacturer's designs are spliced together with pictures of green tea being prepared and served in the manner of the 'way of tea'. The voice-over tells us that what makes Japanese cars distinctive and appreciated all over the world are the aesthetics of their design which express Japan's unique artistic tradition in a modern technological form. Collectively, these kinds of representations constitute an aestheticisation and even a feminisation of the national image.

There are a number of criticisms of these exotic and romantic images of the Japanese. The most strident critic of the *Japonisme* trend during the earliest period of contact between Japan and the West (late nineteenth century) was Oscar Wilde, whose comments anticipate the questions I want to raise, although not the tone of what I want to say in this thesis: 'Now do you imagine that the Japanese people as they are presented to us in art, have any existence? The actual people who live in Japan are not unlike the general run of English people; that is to say, they are extremely commonplace, and have nothing curious or extraordinary about them. In fact the



whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people...the Japanese people are, as I have said, simply a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art' (quoted in Littlewood 1996: 68-69). Wilde's comments are important because they make explicit the 'fictional' nature of these representations. But his criticism is not unique and was anticipated eight centuries earlier in Japan, by the '*Tale of Genji*' (*Genji Monogatari*) and the remarks of an eleventh century Buddhist nun, Imoto. She is addressing a 'fashionable young courtier' who yearns for an austere life pursuing eremitic pastimes: 'I am afraid I cannot take statements of that kind very seriously. So far from persuading me that you have any real desire for seclusion, such a remark merely convinces me that you are thoroughly worldly; for nothing is more fashionable nowadays than such professions as you have just made' (quoted in Cooper 1994: 312). Aesthetes like those criticised by Wilde do have an existence and not only in eleventh century Japan.

One extraordinary aesthete from the modern period who might well have given Oscar Wilde cause to rethink his assertions is the literary figure Yukio Mishima. The life, literary works and, most notoriously, death of Mishima have become in the Western popular imagination a quintessential icon of the Japanese aesthetic and ascetic modes of being. The magazine Newsweek condensed his life and summed up this view soon after his death in 1970: 'He was a living example of the contrast between two historic Japanese forces - the spiritual and the worldly, the aesthetic and the Martial. And it was his attempt to put aside the Chrysanthemum and bring back the sword that led to his doom' (quoted in Littlewood 1996: 40). There are powerful associations both within and outside Japan of what Ian Buruma has described as the 'primitive, often obscene, frequently violent side of Japanese culture' with 'the austere, controlled, exquisitely restrained, melancholy beauty most people in the West have come to associate with Japan' which are located in a 'Buddhist inspired aesthetic' (Buruma 1984: 11,13).

The darker side of this ascetic, and as we shall see, eremitic, mode of being, is also a powerful image of Japan and reaches its apotheosis in the rhetoric of Western war

literature. Books like *'Knights of Bushido'* (Russell 1958) and *The Naked Island* (Braddon 1951) which deal with the experiences of prisoners-of-war are dramatic evidence of the ways in which images of the Japanese as ascetic spill over into those of the fanatic. Representations of an ascetic, disciplined and sometimes even fanatical Japan reach their most intense expression when the *Bushidō* ('Way of the Warrior') ethos is presented as the core characteristic of Japan. The Buddhologist Giuseppe Tucci, who had sympathies with the Mussolini regime, even used the idea of the *Bushidō* ethos to argue that there were essential similarities between Italian fascism and Japanese Zen (Clarke 1997: 196).

The persistence of this ascetic topos as a way of explaining and comparing Japan to the world is illustrated in the newspaper coverage of the fiftieth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. One respected newspaper magazine (*Independent magazine* 05/08/95) to appear on that occasion was boldly titled *'Kamikaze Nation'*, and promised 'fifty years on, the pathology of a national psychosis'. Focusing on the notorious *Kamikaze* pilots, the dominant image in this article was of a nation whose core values were those of the Oriental ascetic and fanatic: 'The whole nation was in the grip of this mystical vision. Its conceptual origin can be traced back centuries to the importation of Taoism and Zen Buddhism by the Samurai class as its own cult of austerity and enlightenment'. This article linked together complex elements from Japan's past in order to explain not only an extraordinary period in history, but also to account for a 'national psychosis'.

This brief overview of the use of the ascetic/aesthetic tropes in Western representations of Japan has demonstrated that some of the possible consequences are an exoticisation, feminisation and 'othering' of the Japanese. The origins of features used in these modes of representation, like Zen Buddhism and *Chadō*, are as diverse and complex as the history of Japanese art and religion.

There are other aspects of Japanese lives, family structure and work practices, for example, which are grounded in its history and tradition and have also been



represented as uniquely Japanese. What distinguishes features like Zen and *Chadō* from these representations is that we find in them a convergence of ideas between Japan and the West about what constitutes the 'real' authentic Japan. The 'aesthetic' and 'ascetic' modes of being Japanese are only fused together as a 'system of thought' for the representation of Japanese Culture and as a set of physical practices for the participation of 'ordinary' individuals in the Zen arts.

The aesthetic and ascetic modes have been most successfully merged in the Western popular imagination through the encounter with Zen Buddhism. Western interest in Buddhism began in the late nineteenth century with the 'discovery' and translation of religious texts by scholars like F. Max Müller, Brian Hodgson and Eugene Burnof (Lopez 1995). Of all the Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism, Zen has had the biggest influence in the West, as a textual tradition initially propagated through the activities of the Theosophical Society (Clarke 1997: 100) and as an aesthetic genre or style popularised in the 'Great Exhibitions' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The full impact and extent of Zen on Western artistic, literary and intellectual movements of the period is still largely unexplored. The most recent and exhaustive study: *'Oriental Enlightenment'* (1997) by J.J. Clarke is an extremely important addition to the literature, although it deals with much broader themes than Zen alone.

Clarke argues that 'the encounter between Asian and Western thought' was a 'dialogue' involving borrowings on both sides and characterised by a profound disenchantment with the rationalism of the Enlightenment (ibid 1997). This sense of a spiritual vacuum in the modern condition was at its height in the 1950's and 1960's and is particularly evident in the search for 'aesthetic purism' by the 'beat' and hippie' movements, but had been gathering momentum for some time prior to that.

There had been attempts to use Zen as the ground for an inter-faith dialogue since it first emerged as a 'religion' on the international stage at the 'World's Parliament of Religions' in 1893. Important figures in comparative religious studies like Martin

Buber (1878-1965), Thomas Merton (1915-1968) and Paul Tillich (1886-1965), tried to link different religious traditions with Zen as part of a search for a universal basis to all religions (ibid 1997).

These imaginative and creative scholarly encounters with Zen also provoked passionate criticism. Zen was dismissed by some writers as 'irrationalism', and seen as 'anti-humanist' and 'anti-modernist' (ibid 1997: 197). Arthur Koestler spoke of Zen in *'The Lotus and the Robot'* as 'pseudo-mystical verbiage' and although he concedes that 'applied Zen' (meaning the Zen arts) 'show remarkable psychological insight', asserts that Zen ideas are 'at best an existentialist hoax, at worst a web of solemn absurdities' (Koestler 1960: 245,233). The Indologist R.C. Zaehner was so disapproving of Zen that he even managed at one point to argue that the Charles Manson murder of Sharon Tate were partly inspired by its ideas (Clarke 1997: 198).

When these criticisms equate Zen with core characteristics of Japanese culture there is a certain irony to them. It is now emerging that the Japanese philosophy and presentation of Zen in the writings of influential scholars like D.T. Suzuki and Nishida Kitaro were directly influenced by European intellectual movements (Parkes 1996; May 1996; Heisig and Maraldo 1994). These philosophical encounters, which involved an exchange of ideas with important intellectuals like Nietzsche,<sup>4</sup> Schopenhauer and Heidegger will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven. But one indication of their level of significance is evident in Martin Heidegger's response to Suzuki's writings. He is recorded as saying that: 'If I have understood Suzuki correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings' (in Clarke 1997: 115). Other European intellectuals whose interests in Zen and Japan were fostered by Suzuki's writings were the psychologists Erich Fromm and Carl Jung, both of whom saw the goals of psychoanalysis and Zen as the same.

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<sup>4</sup> The reception of Nietzsche's ideas in Japan was extremely influential in the so-called 'aesthetic life debate' (Parkes 1996).

But the most enthusiastic and popular expression of this fascination with Zen occurred in the '*beat*' movement through the writings of Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, Alan Ginsberg, Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley and Herman Hesse. This literary movement understood Zen both as a form of mystical religiosity with the promise of self discovery, and as a form of knowledge of and about the Orient.

The themes of cultural and spiritual crises we see articulated in these religious, philosophical and literary dialogues with Zen and Japan are all elements of 'Orientalism', as it is defined by Zhaoming Qian as a 'constitutive element of the modernism of the 1910's and 1920's (in Clarke 1995: 5) for, as Clarke points out, 'it helped to give expression and substance to a sense of deep cultural crisis and to loss of faith in the West's idea of progress through scientific rationalism, and to a need for new modes of representation' (ibid: 101). The idea of Orientalism of aesthetic purity and the potential for spiritual renewal residing in activities like the Zen arts of Japan continues to have an appeal and important consequences for many foreigners who go to Japan.

One individual whom I heard of whilst in Japan emphasises how profoundly one can be enchanted by the spiritual and cultural possibilities of the Zen arts. An article in the Daily Yomiuri newspaper (15/12/1994) told the story of a Czech woman, who is currently studying the 'Way of Archery' (*Kyūdō*) and the 'Way of Fencing' (*Kendō*). In her spare time she also studies the 'Way of Tea' (*Chadō*), 'Paper Sculpture' (*Origami*), 'Flower Arranging' (*Ikebana*), and the 'Way of Calligraphy' (*Shōdō*). Obviously an avid enthusiast of the Zen arts, she is surprised and dismayed that young Japanese are not more knowledgeable of their cultural heritage. She plans to return to the Czech Republic so as to open a 'Culture Centre' and introduce the Czech people to 'Japanese Culture'.

This woman's narrative highlights the powerful connections perceived to exist between the Zen arts and Japanese Culture. But as metaphors of and for modes of being 'Japanese', in what senses if any are the Zen arts privileged above other historically significant national symbols like those described by Emiko Ohnuki Tierney

in *'The Monkey as Mirror'* (1987) and *'Rice as Self'* (1993)? The Zen arts are certainly not distinct because of their consistent involvement in a historic and ongoing exchange of ideas between Japan and the West. Other commentators like Kurt Singer in his book, *'Mirror, Sword and Jewel'* (1973), and Harumi Befu (1992) in his treatment of the nationalist symbols of flag and anthem, have discussed the ways in which these symbols also have widespread international recognition and are the sources of discussion about national identity.

In this thesis I shall argue that the Zen arts are a different kind of national image because involvement with them is largely active and local, which is to say that they are a skill people can learn and perform at establishments close to where they live and work. Even for the passive observer of the Zen arts there is, I contend, an understanding that most performers are 'ordinary' people doing extraordinary things. As activities premised on *praxis*, the Zen arts offer the practitioner the opportunity and it is no more and no less than a potentiality, to actively embody and intimately engage with an 'ideology of enchantment'. I use the term 'ideology' in the sense that Althusser defined it as 'a system of representations (possessing their own logic and rigour) endowed with an existence and a historical role within a given society' (quoted in Faure 1993: 3).

Above, I have emphasised the existence of such a system of representations constructed by foreigners within a history of contact with the Japanese 'Other'. It is a 'system of thought' for the representation of Japan, sometimes referred to as the 'Discourse of Orientalism' after Edward Said's thesis (1978). The logic of and assumptions behind this discourse are a useful guide in an investigation of the relations of power which constrain our understanding of the Zen arts. There are many points of contact between Orientalism and the ideologies relating to the Zen arts produced by the Japanese themselves. But there are also fundamental limitation to the application of Orientalism to Japan and to the Zen arts, for it is particularly an exposition of the ways in which Anglo-French Institutions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced knowledge about the Islamic Near East. Taking its cue

from the Foucauldian notion of an 'archaeology of discourses', Orientalism asserts that knowledge about the Orient is a function of Western imperial power.

Said sees Orientalism as a single, totalising, grand narrative that can be broadly defined in three ways as: a 'style of thought' which establishes a profound division between the Orient and the occident, and, as an 'academic title' to describe the institutions which produce knowledge. Finally, as a 'corporate institution' concerned with the management of that same Orient (Turner 1996: 96). It is useful to deal with each of these points in turn because they illustrate important aspects of the Orientalism of Japan.

We have already seen above that Orientalism in Japan is not a single narrative but a 'dialogue' and therefore as Clarke has argued: 'cannot be fully understood in terms of 'power' and 'domination' (Clarke 1997: 8). The exchange of ideas between Japan and Europe was creative and open-ended with both positive and negative<sup>5</sup> hues, not at all a hegemonic discourse. The academic study of Japan has never been caught up in the same relations of colonial power and domination as the Near East. The kinds of negative and racist stereotyping found in representations of the Near East is less pronounced and more ambiguous in Japan. Since the opening up of Japan in the Meiji period, foreign observers have noted that the Japanese are plainly 'civilised' and highly developed in areas like education (Littlewood 1996). The second criterion of Said's Orientalism is much more useful, and can be applied to describe the Orientalism of Japan as a 'system of thought' for the establishment of national and cultural difference.

The Orientalist paradigm involves two theories which we have already examined in connection with the Zen arts: The theory of 'Sensuality' or aestheticism, and a theory of 'Discipline' or asceticism (Turner 1994). These theories coalesced in the Zen arts such that their performance could evoke an idea of Japanese uniqueness. Through the practice of the Zen arts, 'Japan' and 'Japanese Culture' are constituted as a distinct

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<sup>5</sup> Said's version of Orientalism is by and large a critical and rather sombre account.



object of knowledge and mode of being. This is perhaps the fundamental paradigm of Orientalism, the production of difference through objectification.

The objectification of 'Japan' as an aesthetic essence is crucial in the Zen arts because it sustains the notion of a culture that can be directly transmitted and expressed. It implies that there is an original aesthetic form from which an entire culture may be derived. But it also suggests that people; foreigners like myself, are incapable of dealing with a topic such as the Zen arts in anything but a demeaning or romanticising way because we stand outside this culture. This is a point which Said is unclear about, for on the one hand he asserts that all knowledge is constructed by Imperial matrices of power, but at the same time also concedes that an individual is not totally determined by these relations of power, or that useful and positive investigations have not been carried out (Clarke 1997: 24-25). The most appropriate anthropological response to this issue, is that Said's Orientalism is a form of discourse analysis based on studying the relations between various texts. If we accept that the Zen arts are simply the product of discourse (of various texts) we run the risk not only of ignoring agency, but also of the practical and 'located' quality of knowledge of the Zen arts. Although the textual qualities of the Zen arts are important, they cannot be understood as the exclusive content of a 'system of thought' for the representation of 'Japan'. Above all, the Zen arts are a practised system of embodiment, realised within a social community of participants and most amenable to the kind of insight that ethnography can offer. The problem is, as De Certeau notes, 'Representation thus disguises the praxis that organises it' (quoted in Faure 1993: 112).

If we want to uncover how the social and embodied sense of knowing about the Zen arts that comes from being a practitioner becomes a representation of Japanese Culture then this is where Said's thesis is most relevant. The most important thing about Said is that he forces a questioning of the historical and institutional conditions within which knowledge about the Orient is produced. For, in the popular imagination and in the perceptions of practitioners, the idea of the Zen arts is to a significant degree the product of ideological and institutional forces.

Identifying the ways in which ideological and institutional forces construct an idea of the Zen arts, inventing and reinventing them as an object of Japanese Culture, does not suppose that the meaning which individuals create out of their experience mirrors representations and each other. It is to recognise that there are certain fundamental constraints which inform the ideology of the Zen arts and the experience of their practice. These constraints are both institutional and historical. Orientalist representations of the Zen arts as 'Culture' and as 'Japan' are produced within institutional matrices of power as part of an historical process. In the modern period (since 1868), the idea of the Zen arts is enmeshed in the agendas of institutions like schools, universities and 'culture centres' (*karuchā sentā*) and represented predominantly through visual forms like photographs, films, advertising and video. The visualisation of culture has tended to objectify the Zen arts and commodify its images. Within the contemporary media interplay of signs, the Zen arts have become both objects of desire (commodities) for cultural authenticity and in their embodied aspects, phenomenological reminders of its loss or 'vanishing' (Ivy 1996).

Identifying the history and specifying the operation of these institutional and media forms on our understanding of the Zen arts is the most important contribution of Said's Orientalism. It is an approach to understanding culture which as James Clifford remarks: 'draws attention not to the interpretation of cultural "texts" but to their relations of production' (Clifford & Marcus 1986: 13). By focusing attention on the politics of representation I do not want to diminish the significance of practice and agency. My interest is in the space where the self and issues of 'Nation'/'Culture' meet. I want to explore the Zen arts by way of a general inquiry into the register of what is often called 'Traditional' and 'Cultural' in Japan. This kind of investigation implicates (1) modern media forms and Institutions (2) Japanese discourses on national identity (3) Western academic, artistic and literary discourses as a form of Orientalism.

The term Orientalism is appropriate once we amend Said's thesis and recognise that knowledge about Japan is produced not only by the West, but also from within, by the Japanese themselves. This dialogue between Japan and the West is part of a response to the anxieties of the modern condition. It is the role which Clarke assigns to Orientalism, as 'counter-cultural', 'counter hegemonic' and as a 'corrective mirror' (1997: 27-28). This is why the Japanese discourses on national identity are sometimes called 'Reverse Orientalism' (Faure 1995). They are the result of two separate but related processes: the emergence of industrial capitalism in 1868 (after the Meiji 'restoration'); and an internal reaction which sought to construct a cultural identity in opposition to these developments and the intrusion of the foreign and modern 'Other'. These 'National/Cultural Self fashionings' (Ivy 1995) are not particular to this initial period of modernisation, but have resurfaced subsequently and are still relevant today. They share many of the same features as Western discourses. The *iemoto* system of social organisation for example, is reinvented as an icon of 'Japaneseness' to explain both Japan's economic successes and its continuities with an imagined past. There is frequent reference to Japanese aesthetic and ascetic modes of being as distinctive markers of what is unique about Japan. Not only are the features of Western representations reproduced in these discourses but also are the Orientalist logic and assumptions that form a theory of aesthetic differences with modernisation and the foreign 'Other'. This was no accident, because as I shall discuss in chapter seven, Japanese literati, philosophers and intellectuals consciously borrowed Western epistemologies to construct these discourses (Tanaka 1993; Pincus 1996; Heisig & Maraldo 1994).

Out of these borrowings emerged an idea of the Zen arts which is most popularly and influentially expressed in the writings of Daisetz Suzuki. Suzuki was one of the main philosophers of the so called 'Kyōto school of Philosophy' and along with his contemporary Nishida Kitaro, he set the terms for the popular interpretation of Japanese Zen.



The impact of Suzuki's version of Zen was felt far outside Japanese intellectual circles. Through the English translation of his book *Zen and Japanese Culture* (1959) and along with other exponents like Kaiten Nukariya in *Religion of the Samurai* (1913) and Kakuzō Okakura in *The book of Tea* (1906), Zen came to be regarded as the core element of Japanese Culture. It was the totalizing nature of these versions of Japan which struck a common chord among both foreigners and Japanese. Here is Paul Demieville's review of Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture*: 'Almost all the Culture of that country is interpreted in relation to Zen which becomes a master key giving access not only to aestheticism (painting, poetry) but also to Japanese militarism' (quoted in Faure 1993: 66).

In Suzuki's work, Zen is not an ideology or a belief system but the 'spirit' of all religion, a universal 'essence'. At the same time, it is in the culture and psychology of the Japanese that Zen reaches its fullest expression. This 'confusion' is clearer still in Suzuki's historiography. He emphasises both the a-historical nature of Zen and attempts to explain its uniqueness through an historical approach (Faure 1993: 65). In Suzuki's account, the 'particularisation' of Zen, which is to say its grounding within a socio-historical context and I would add its 'localisation' in aesthetic forms such as we find in the Zen Arts, accounts both for its failure (to be transcendent and 'pure') and its uniqueness (as a product of Japanese history).

These comments, it should be noted, do not relate to Suzuki's intentions as an author, a subject which would require a great deal more analysis than there is space for here. My argument concerns the relationship between Suzuki's theories on Zen and the discourse of 'Orientalism'. Bernard Faure contends that the impact of Suzuki and other writers on our understanding of Zen (and, by extension, of the Zen arts) has nothing to do with their 'philosophical or literary qualities' but is the result of an 'historical conjuncture' (1993: 54). That is also to claim that the sources of Suzuki's epistemological/ontological 'confusion' lies in the convergence of processes of modernisation with discursive Orientalist strategies for apprehending the world of Zen. But I would suggest that there is also a relationship between 'Zen' as it is

described by Suzuki and its impact on the world. Zen and the Zen arts are a different order of knowing and being than can be adequately accounted for by the naturalistic methods of enquiry that typify 'Orientalist' strategies.

In the Zen arts we are faced with something that is physically 'real' and at the same time very mysterious. The fascination comes from being removed out of our everyday existence into this new space of being and knowing. Even when we are familiar with this space, the conditions for that fascination remain. The aesthetic forms, (which may be expressed as a word, image or movement in a system of physical gestures) are an object of fascination through their relationship to 'Other' worlds. These other worlds are the features of Orientalist discourses, like the aesthetic and ascetic modes of being, the idea of the 'feminine' and of a moral and ethical code of conduct. For practitioners and investigators alike, it is this relationship between aesthetic form and 'Other' worlds which often instigates and sustains their involvement. The implication here is of a relationship between 'form' and 'meaning', and of the Zen arts as 'an engine of otherness always potentially within ourselves' (Schneider 1993: 15). Discourses and the aesthetic forms which manifest them, can be patterned as matrices of power and explained. But these patterns are not the same as the experiences of those who do the manifesting.

The notion that experience in the practice of Zen/Zen arts can be independent of any individual or socio-cultural context, a 'pure essence', is a central claim of the Kyoto school of philosophy and the foundation for the view that Zen is a kind of mysticism. Victor Turner, writing in the 1960's and relying a great deal on Suzuki, saw a 'communitas' aspect in Zen, in the idea of 'seeking oneness' (1974: 203). If we put too much emphasis on this particular aspect of Zen, the position of 'communitas' 'a positionless position', then we might overlook those other aspects which are also important, such as the fact that Zen is an institutional arrangement with political implications. Also, these ideas have a particular history. To say that 'seeking oneness' makes Zen just one more example of The Mystical Experience, obscures the particular and distinct vividness of this idea as it develops through the Zen tradition.

As Steven Katz has demonstrated in his study of mysticism and religious traditions, 'We must recognise that a right understanding of mysticism is not just a question of studying the reports of the mystic after the experiential event but also of acknowledging that the experience itself as well as the form in which it is reported is shaped by concepts which the mystic brings to and which shape his (her) experience' (Katz 1983: 4).

It is characteristic of accounts of mystical experience, and Zen is no exception, that ordinary language and epistemological standards are disclaimed as inadequate. The notorious difficulties of translating Japanese 'Key verbal concepts' (Moeran 1989: 56) like *mu* ('nothingness') and *ma*, ('interval') reflect these epistemological limitations. The ideological constraints and the relations of power within which efforts at translation are enmeshed is apparent in attempts by philosophers like Nishida Kitarō to use *mu* as a means of contrasting 'Oriental Nothingness' with 'Western Being'. The use to which the concept of *ma* has been put by the cultural critic Roland Barthes is also evidence of this. For Barthes, *ma* is without meaning - not a 'thing' but a 'dismembered', decentered, dislocated reminiscence' which can explain and connect Japanese architecture, the arts, film etc (Pilgrim 1995: 55). This kind of ineffable language is typical of the linguistic forms in which Zen experience is characterised. It is part of what has been described as the 'Language of *Seishin*' ('Spirit') (Moeran 1989: 56), and it is one of the fundamental aesthetic forms for representing and legitimating participation in the Zen arts.

One consequence of the use of mystical language, and, as we saw earlier, exotic 'picturesque' images, as the dominant modes of representation, is that participants have little space for the articulation of other, perhaps more mundane but no less important experiences. The relationship of the Zen arts to 'everyday' events tends to be squeezed out by their metaphoric re-presentation. Creating a space to express that relationship runs counter to the Orientalist strategy of representing Zen experience within a privileged 'cultural' vacuum, separate from the contingencies of time and space and the subjectivities of the self.

This dialectical tension between the practical experience of Zen and its representation as a form of 'pure experience' has been characterised as the 'Sudden/Gradual' paradigm. The 'sudden' experience of Zen refers to an 'awakening' or 'enlightenment' that is said to be 'a radical discontinuity in the flow of everyday life' and 'grace of the instant' (Faure 1991: 45). Technically, the 'sudden' perspective cannot be represented since any attempt to convey this experience into a form like language turns it into a 'gradualism'; that is, a tradition.

I do not deny the possibility of such an experience which would be a radical challenge to reality. But, following Steven Katz, I would note that with few exceptions mystical traditions have a 'conservative' character since they are forced to represent themselves within certain epistemological and ideological limits (1983: 3). As Faure remarks: 'this is not to deny the truth claims of the 'sudden' insight but is simply to stress that such insights tend to be reappropriated by the tradition' (Faure 1991: 43). Experience of participation of the Zen arts, by its representation in textual forms becomes a matter of rhetoric, the *'Rhetoric of Immediacy'* (1991).

It is with respect to the problematic of experience and its epistemic register, that all interpretations of the Zen arts intellectually situate themselves. There are those who confront and set about finding explanations for the representations of the Zen arts. Then there are those who are so taken with the experience that they seek to preserve or renew the circumstances that evoked it (Schneider 1993: 3-4). It is into this second category that one can place the popular textual and visual representations, which attempt to overcome the exigencies of context and self through the production of a 'cultural' vacuum, tradition. In this autonomous place the objectivist and teleological fallacies merge to reconstitute the past and the future in terms of an Orientalist present.

Within the first category I place those rational/discursive approaches which address the Orientalist claim to mystical experience and attempt to make sense of it.

Prominent among these are those anthropological accounts which create a sense of structure and order by treating the Zen arts as primarily a system of ritual and symbolic action (Anderson 1991; Brown 1997; Kondo 1985; Kiyota 1995). Examinations of the 'personal' dimension are dominated by psychological analyses which gain control over the subject matter by quantifying and measuring experience in terms of biological responses (Layton 1988).

What I am querying here is not the methods of these social scientists. All of them reveal important facets and details of the Zen arts. My query concerns their 'representative strategies', which in failing to critically examine the epistemic register of the Zen arts leave unanswered an important question: What are the conditions that make it possible for the Zen arts to be compelling versions of Japan and allow space for the practitioners own interests and intentions?

What are we to make then of phenomena like the Zen arts, an investigation of which may yield several types of meaning, but only some of which are worthy of investigation and accounted for? What is it in the nature of Zen mystical experience that allows for such varied and ultimately unsatisfactory interpretations? For me a convincing thesis has recently been advanced by Mark Schneider in his book *'Culture and Enchantment'* (1993). Schneider argues that the twentieth century study of culture takes place in circumstances similar to those of the Enlightenment. Like the natural philosophers of the Enlightenment who did not make clear distinctions between the study of natural and supernatural phenomena, so it is problematic for contemporary investigators of culture to distinguish between the mundane and the magical. Schneider describes making sense out of cultural phenomena as a process of 'Disenchanting' the world, sorting out the mundane and the magical. Culturally enchanting phenomena have certain properties, 'their behaviour is highly mercurial ... inhospitable to explanation and mature sciences normally avoid them. ... They are elusive because consensus about them is difficult to achieve, and enchanting because their behaviour is accounted for in startling though ultimately obscure ways. ... Essentially what happens is that things previously thought to be without meaning are

found to possess it, and to explain how this can be, interpreters locate its source in strange entities like the unconscious or other ghostly agencies. In result it behaves in (quite peculiar) ways we can appreciate but not really explain since it arrives from domains that are beyond our current understanding' (Schneider 1993: xi).

This notion of culturally enchanting phenomena is particularly appealing with respect to an understanding of the organisation of inquiry into Zen. The experience of Zen is so ineffable that the various methods of inquiry into it are distinct and irreconcilable. Part of the attraction of the field of Zen seems to be a function of the way inquiry into it is organised.

Here is Suzuki writing of enlightenment: 'It is the silence of thunder obtained in the midst of the flash ... it pervades all things oriental', and again, 'It is the silence of an "eternal abyss" in which all contrast and conditions are buried', and finally, 'There is no object in Zen upon which to fix thought. Zen is a wafting cloud in the sky. No screw fastens it, no string holds it; it moves as it lists' (1969: 37,35,41). The suggestion is that there are powers or principles at work not just beyond our understanding but quite possibly of another order altogether. This kind of ineffable language seems to be comprehensible only within its own terms and autonomous conditions.

This is Eugene Herrigel in his book *'Zen and the Art of Archery'* (1953) describing his master's instructions: 'We master archers say: with the upper end of the bow the archer pierces the sky, on the lower end, as though attached by a thread, hangs the earth. If the shot is loosed with a jerk there is danger of the thread snapping. For purposeful and violent people the rift becomes final and they are left in the awful centre between heaven and earth.' 'What must I do?' asks Herrigel. 'You must learn to wait properly'. 'And how does one learn that?' 'By letting go of yourself, leaving yourself and everything yours behind you so decisively that nothing more is left of you but a purposeless tension.' So what is this state of mind that the master advocates?



Later the master describes it as follows: 'At bottom purposeless and egoless, truly spiritual' and called the 'right presence of mind' (1953: 47).

I want to pursue this notion of the 'mind' a little further because it reflects an 'Orientalist' perspective in writing about the Zen Arts. The exoticisation and mystification of the Zen Arts needs to be understood as an enchanting discourse because it is an Orientalist one. Here is Suzuki again: 'Zen is a unique product of the Oriental mind and its uniqueness consists, so far as its practical aspect goes, in its methodical training of the mind in order to mature it to the state of *satori* ('enlightenment') when all its secrets are revealed' (1969: 99).

For Thomas Hoover, in his book '*Zen Culture*', the Zen Arts are the cultivation of the 'Counter Mind' and Japanese Culture is by extension the 'Culture of the Counter Mind'. For Hoover 'Zen Culture', is equivalent to 'Japanese Culture' and evolved in a natural ordered fashion as 'the ch'an masters intuitively realised the existence of the non-verbal half of the mind during the T'ang era (618-907). They and later the Japanese used this knowledge to create a spectrum of art and cultural forms which exploits, strengthens and sharpens these same non-verbal faculties' (1978: 224).

This kind of Orientalist discourse reifies the Zen Arts as an unchanging system of practices that are basically a function of the universal need to cultivate the non-verbal, intuitive part of the mind. Karlfried Dürckheim (philosopher, psychologist and long time devotee of Eastern Spiritualism) in his book '*The Japanese Cult of Tranquillity*' write that 'Western Culture', emphasises 'Rational thought and technical power, it is a culture of performing works which accepts reckless conflict with the forces of Nature. Western mentality is characterised by its exaggerated mistrust for being independent of Nature ... Japanese Tranquillity (which is cultivated through the Zen Arts) seems to contain something of Nature's own wisdom. The East, through the Cult of Tranquillity has preserved to a greater extent contact with the original unity of physis (Nature)' (1974: 10). An essentialised opposition is being created here between a Western Rational Mind, which characterises a culture in conflict with

nature, and an Oriental or Japanese Intuitive 'Counter Mind' which characterises a culture in harmony with nature.

The identifying feature of these accounts is the blurring or confusion of a distinction between the rational and the mystical, the imaginative and the instrumental. They are part of what Clarke calls the discourse on '*Oriental Enlightenment*' (1997) and address the search for a form of self-reflection and an escape from the modern condition. Empirical strategies are inadequate ways of dealing with the Zen arts because they are 'moral aesthetic' phenomena, what Richard Rorty calls an 'edifying discourse'. Edification is a 'poetic' activity which takes us 'out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings' (Rorty 1980: 360).

How then should we regard those authors who like Suzuki profess to represent the experience of participation in the Zen arts when the epistemological status of their claims is so weak? Schneider's characterisation of these authors as 'virtuosi' after the seventeenth century term of description for natural philosophers is useful. 'Virtuosi' are men like John Aubrey, one of a class of investigators who promote enchantment as a condition to be enjoyed in its own right. They are regarded by others, to borrow Ray's characterisation of Aubrey in the seventeenth century as 'a little too inclinable to credit strange relations' (Schneider 1993: 4).

If the Zen arts are treated as systems of ritual action, then they pose little difficulty for empirical strategies as the various analyses of the Zen arts as a symbolic system demonstrate (Anderson 1991; Brown 1997; Kondo 1985; Kiyota 1995). The problem and the 'enchantment' of the Zen arts is that their aesthetic forms do not line up in a stable way with their meanings. As words, images and a system of bodily gestures, 'localised' in time and space, they always turn out to signify too much. This is not a comment on the philosophy of the Zen arts, but on the effects of that philosophy in constituting an 'enchanted', 'edifying' discourse. The notion of an 'enchanted' discourse can go some way to accounting for the fascination and seduction of the Zen arts. However it cannot explain peoples actions or account for historical events. It

cannot account for what it means or feels like to do the Zen arts. But it is a 'condition' without which the performance of the Zen arts may not be a representation of 'Japan' or 'Japanese Culture'.

In this epistemological critique of Japanese 'Orientalism', I have tried to show that the logic and assumptions which underlie interpretations of the Zen arts result in a condition of 'enchantment'. This is very much a philosophical explanation for the coexistence of rational and mystical ways of approaching the Zen arts. Another persuasive explanation to this question is provided by Favret Saada (1980). 'It is the two-fold logic of what she calls *'je sais bien, mais quand même'*; I know [that it cannot be true], yet [I somehow believe in it]'. According to Favret Saada, logical and prelogical thinking are not the characteristics of two different categories of people, as Van Gennep and Levy-Bruhl believed but of linguistic positions that any individual can occupy at various times' (Favret Saada 1980: 291). These two approaches, the philosophical and psychological, are, I believe, complementary in as much as both make space for agency and neither privileges as more or less 'authentic' either the rational or mystical ways of thinking.

In the final section of this chapter I want to suggest that what lies behind the organisation of inquiry into the Zen arts and its epistemological 'confusion' is the concern for 'authenticity'. The search for an 'original', a 'pure essence' of Japanese Culture, is clear in the accounts of virtuosi, but it also informs the more empirically based versions.

The embeddedness of the 'idea' of 'Japan' in the discourse of Orientalism has tended toward the attribution of 'authenticity' to aesthetic forms and practices like the Zen arts. But the privileging of an aesthetic tradition is not only the consequence of Orientalist perspectives. So called 'Post Orientalist' perspectives that aim to elicit the 'native point of view' also often end up reinforcing 'fundamentalist' claims. This is clearly the case in Japan where discourses on national identity make assumptions that give intellectual coherence to the retrospective search for a 'real' Japan in the pre-

modern era. One of these assumptions has it that adaptations and concessions of the Zen arts to modern mass cultural forms and institutions are a 'loss of purity'. Implicated here are the ways in which media forms like television, video and cinema project a visual and fictional reality offering for some a profound sense of simulation and in-authentication. This is an issue which Said addresses when he notes that in the age of globalisation and cultural commodification, representations can take on a life of their own, superseding that which they are representing. The new communications media implicated in this process raise important questions about authenticity. The modern media, utilised for the transmission of aesthetic forms like the Zen arts, are absolutely necessary for their perpetuation and, at the same time, profoundly unsettling. I will suggest in the ethnography which follows, that the impact and significance of new communications media for practitioners of the Zen arts varies across time and space, reflecting both sociohistorical changes in the community and individual creativity.

The alternative to the Tradition/Nostalgia paradigm of Japan and the Zen arts suggests that the convergence of 'traditional' and 'modern' aesthetic forms has not resulted in a 'loss' or 'vanishing' (Ivy 1996) of the former, but a reconstitution of the latter. In the writings of cultural critics like Roland Barthes (1982) and Kōjin Karatani (1988), modern media forms and institutions are interpreted as the expression of an enduring and unique Japanese aestheticism. The 'strong' version of this view maintains that the 'modern' never existed in Japan, and that Japan has in its 'Traditional' aesthetic aspects always been 'Post-modern' (Fu & Heine 1995). Both these 'post orientalist' perspectives, the nostalgic and the post-modern locate the 'real' Japan in the objectified essences of pre-modern aesthetic forms like the Zen arts.

Questions of authenticity in these 'internal cultural debates' (Moeran 1989) are at one level about the relationship between and aesthetic constitution of tradition and modernity but on another hand raise questions about the very usefulness of discourse. Is there an alternative, and where can it be located?

The alternative to the tradition/modernity debate forces one to choose between the relative value of discursive and personal statements. If the 'real' Japan is not to be found in the Zen arts as they are 'scripted' and visualised in Orientalist discourses then are we to look elsewhere at their practical and 'everyday' existence? (De Certeau 1984).

We have seen that even the most 'Orientalist' approaches to the Zen arts furnish a wealth of detail and yield valuable insights. They offer practitioners the possibility of 'enchantment'. Within the Orientalist realm of being and knowing, practitioners of the Zen arts may through their practice physically express differences and sameness to 'Other' worlds.

But at the same time we must recognise that any kind of discourse analysis (like Said's) is concerned primarily with the ways in which statements are related to each other as 'discursive formations'. There is little or no sensitivity to the authors and indeed subjects of these statements and what they have to say or feel. James Clifford has suggested that it is just not possible to account for both the personal and discursive aspects of Orientalism: 'One cannot combine within the same analytic totality both personal statements and discursive statements, even though they may be lexically identical. Said's experience seems to show that when the analysis of authors and traditions is intermixed with the analysis of discursive formations, the effect is a mutual weakening' (Clifford 1988: 269).

But if we do away with the need for an 'analytic totality' then there is no necessity for making a clear division between the identity created through discourse and through the self. I shall argue that the 'Culture' of the Zen arts, its 'enchantment' and its creative interpretations, emerge from the socially constituted and embodied space between discourse and practice.

I am not looking or expecting to find 'Japanese Culture' in the Zen arts. The idea of a singular, unitary 'Zen art', like that of 'Japan' is part of a 'scripted', rhetorical,

discursive authenticity. Authenticity does not lie with those who can produce or deconstruct discourse, not with the 'native point of view', nor with the 'practical' and 'everyday'. People who take part in a Zen activity may be interested in the history of the institution and in the various interpretations offered about the activity since this may make their participation in the activity more meaningful. Attempts to deconstruct the essentialised identity of the Zen arts and the 'Japan' which is expressed through them disenchant but also disempower practitioners. In removing the demand for homogeneity, we can focus on the ways in which embodied performance reveals both discursive assumptions and also expresses creative self-conscious selves (Adams 1996).



## Chapter 2

### A World Apart - Ascetic Reclusion and Aesthetic Enchantment in the History of the Zen Arts

I have outlined some of the images which are signified by the 'idea' of the Zen arts and described briefly the historical conditions out of which they emerged. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the internal features of the Zen arts by depicting their history. This is not a detailed or conventional history, but a genealogy of the concepts and terms of the Zen arts. When I use the term Zen arts I am referring to a genre which includes particularly, but not exclusively, two activities: the 'Way of Tea' (*Chadō*) and one of the 'Martial ways' (*Budō*) known as *Shorinji Kempo*.

The two Japanese terms which come closest to the sense of Zen arts and have been used to refer to both *Chadō* and *Budō* are *Okeikogoto*,<sup>1</sup> 'Aesthetic pursuits' and *Shugyō*, 'ascetic methods of 'self cultivation''. These two themes, aestheticism and asceticism, recur throughout the history of *Chadō* and *Budō* and are difficult to separate. But if we are to distinguish these themes as internal features of the Zen arts which have inspired their representation as an idea and an ideal of Japanese culture then we need to describe their historical origins.

The term *Shugyō* originally refers to the methods of 'self cultivation' particular to two forms of esoteric Buddhism, Shingon and Tendai in the Heian period (794 - 1181). Shingon and Tendai Buddhism employed a variety of practices including prolonged spells of meditation and fasting as well as exercises like *Kaihōgyō*, 'endurance walking over mountains'. These practices constitute two methods: one demanding 'continual sitting' (*jōza zanmai*) and the other 'continual walking' (*jōgyō zanmai*) (Yuasa 1993: 11). It is out of the latter, active connotation of *Shugyō* that a theory of the Zen arts begins to emerge. The theory is that through continual and

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<sup>1</sup> *Okeiko* are 'lessons' and as the term is used today refer to a multiplicity of different activities including piano playing and choral singing.

repetitive performance of systematically organised actions or tasks, the adept undergoes a psychological change. Yasuo Yuasa describes it as follows: 'the connotations embraced by the word *gyō* carries the sense of strengthening the mind (spirit) and enhancing the personality; as a human being, by training the body' (1993: 10)<sup>2</sup>. The goal of undertaking the active practice of *Shugyō* was what the priest Kūkai, founder of Shingon Buddhism called *Sokushin jōbutsu*, 'enlightenment with this very body'. This state of being was based on the Mahayana Buddhist philosophy of the non-duality of body and mind. The physical form of the body and the state of mind as it repeatedly practises the same movements become one. It is also described as 'meditation in motion' (*undoteki meisu*) and as Yasuo Yuasa points out: 'the philosophy behind it soon greatly influenced the artistry and martial arts of Japan' (1993: 14). The somatic philosophy of non-dualism is one important area of continuity between the esoteric Buddhist practices of the Heian period and Zen Buddhism where it was called 'Body mind oneness' (*shinshin ichinyo*) and also 'no-mind' (*mushin*).

If these states are the goals of *Shugyō* practices then it is misleading to translate the term as 'self-cultivation'<sup>3</sup>, rather 'there is an existential transformation and the self of everyday experience is discarded and transformed' (ibid: 196). Towards the end of the Heian period, the theory of Buddhist self-cultivation was incorporated into the arts. One area where this continuity is clear, as Konishi Jinichi has pointed out, is the changing use and value of the quality of *yūgen* (cited in Lafleur 1983: 82,174). The origins of *yūgen* are in Tendai Buddhism where it means 'difficult' in the sense of profound, distant or obscure' (Thornhill 1997: 36). But as an aesthetic value in *Waka* poetry and *Nō/Nogaku* theatre around the end of the twelfth century, its meaning changed. The poet Fujiwara Shunzei (1114 - 1204) was the first to treat it as an aesthetic effect 'derived from a sense of longing for an unseen world, or sometimes a sense of wonder at the innate mystery of things', (Thornhill 1997: 39), and drew

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<sup>2</sup> Corresponding to *Shugyō* in Sanskrit is *tapas*, a word whose etymology gives the sense of forging the spirit through the disciplining of the body and awakening a new self (Yuasa 1993: 8).

<sup>3</sup> The term *Shugyō* is made up of two Chinese characters, one meaning 'to master', the other, 'a practice' (Yuasa 1993:196).

directly on sources from Tendai Buddhism to do so. This was a merging of the methods and goals of self-cultivation and of the literary arts. It was tremendously important, for as Yuasa says: 'Accordingly, the ultimate, ideal condition of aesthetic experience has been sought in an analogy or comparison with the experience of *satori*' (enlightenment). ... through the 'practice' (*keiko*) of poetic composition, that is, through training the mind in attempting to compose better poems, just as the monk attempts to achieve *satori* through self cultivation.' 'a poet pursues beauty, expressed by the word *yūgen*' (1993: 24). The literary aesthetic *yūgen* was later changed again and applied, along with other terms from Zen like *keiko* ('practice') to *Nō* theatre and its repertoire of bodily movement by Zeami (1363 - 1443).

For Zeami the relationship between the 'practice' (*keiko*) of *Nō* and its actual theatrical performance was similar to a monk's practice and realisation of enlightenment (*satori*) (Lafleur 1983: 127). At the base of this merging of methods of Buddhist self-cultivation with different artistic genres was a view of 'skill' (*myōyō/waza*) not simply as a technique but as a spiritual phenomenon. The result of this, according to Okada Takehiko, was that 'skill was even thought identical to study (Jap. *gaku*) as something'...which leads 'to a self awareness penetrating the very core of one's life in the world' (1997: 298). In other words, to study any art form like poetry or *Nō* is also to practice a skill with spiritual ends. It is described metaphorically as *dō* or 'the Way'. The idea of *dō* in the Zen arts is positioned in time and space as a 'path' (*mārga*). On this 'path'/'way', through the skilful performance of prescribed actions, one undergoes physical and ideally spiritual change. But it is not possible to progress along this way through trying to possess skill as a form of knowledge. 'Skill' or 'art' is acquired through experience and as such is known as *jissenteiki kufū*, or 'doctrines realised through practice'.

Principles of knowledge based on practical experience are 'rules without rules' (*mukiteiteki kitei*), which when they are embodied by the master in performance are called *junsui keiken*, or unconditioned 'pure experience' (ibid: 299-300). According to this theory, one can only 'know' about any of the Zen arts through the experience

of doing them and becoming skilled. It should not be possible to articulate that experience in anything other than the artistic 'forms' (*katachi*) of that skill, which in the case of the Way of tea for example, is characterised by the physical properties of the expert body and the objects used in performance. Connecting the arts to Buddhist concepts suggests they can only be understood as 'religious' in intent and meaning. About this Toyo Izutsu has written that: 'The *dō* (Way) in the field of art is a way of leading to spiritual enlightenment through art...In the artistic *dō*...particular emphasis is laid on the process, the way, by which one goes toward the goal. To every stage of the way a certain spiritual state corresponds, and at every stage the artist tries to get into communion with the quintessence of art through the corresponding spiritual state, and make himself bloom in the art' (Izutsu quoted in Pilgrim 1993: 56). But the relationship between artistic form and spiritual states of being is more ambiguous than Izutsu admits to here, for monastic Zen abhors the use of any kinds of representative media. This rival tradition which raises doubts about the claim of artistic pursuits to be methods of self-cultivation, is articulated in the Zen expression 'no-thought, no-image' (*munen musō*). But in spite of this contradiction in the concept of *dō*, it has become the metaphor of the Zen arts and is consistently used in contemporary accounts to represent the process by which an aesthetic tradition is constituted and perpetuated. It is transmitted directly from the physical form to the 'mind' (*kokoro*) and describes a gradual process of psychological change within a linear notion of time.

The concept *dō* expresses the relationship between ascetic methods of spiritual germination and maturation and aesthetic practices as a 'religio-aesthetic awareness' (Pilgrim 1993). This is a useful expression because it emphasises the simultaneous development and mutual borrowings of the arts and certain Buddhist concepts. As Sanford, Lafleur and Nagatomi (1992) have argued, when treated historically the arts do not express Buddhist ideas in an aesthetic form, rather, certain Buddhist concepts were developed with the arts. Without the arts these concepts would have had little substance and perhaps no widespread appeal. Buddhism was the primary but not the only religious phenomenon in the arts for it was entirely compatible with other religious traditions like Shintō, Taoism and Confucianism. This notion of

compatibility was supported by a doctrine called *honji suijaku*. 'its main premise was that the multiple deities or kami usually identified with Shintō are, in fact, the "manifest traces" (*suijaku*) of primordial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are their "original ground" (*honji*), (Sanford, Lafleur, Nagatomi 1992: 3).

The development of the Zen arts was strongly influenced by the concepts of other religious traditions which did not conflict with Buddhist doctrine and could be expressed in an aesthetic form. Even before Zen Buddhism was established in Japan during the thirteenth century, there was a powerful connection between religious practice and aesthetic sensibility whose origins were in Shintō. As Richard Pilgrim has noted, the idealization of the beauty of nature and an emphasis on ritual forms as orthopraxis in Shintō aimed at a 'poetic transformation' of the ordinary world (1993: 8). These ritual and aesthetic aspects of Shintō were adapted and absorbed within what became known as the Zen arts during the ninth to twelfth centuries.<sup>4</sup> The primary philosophical source and inspiration of the Zen arts is Buddhism but as Sanford, Lafleur and Nagatomi (1992) point out in their use of the term '*Flowing Traces*', there were many other influences which left their mark and continually blurred the distinction between the aesthetic and the ascetic (1992: 5).

There are multiple religious influences in the early development of the Zen arts and as we shall see in their subsequent history to the present day many secular ones as well. In this syncretic history not only is the distinction between ascetic forms of self cultivation and aesthetic pursuits blurred, but also the distinction between sacred and secular and elite and popular. What appears to remain consistent through all these changes is 'the assumption that the path of the Buddha and that of the artist could with very little difficulty be seen as one' (ibid 1992: 6). It is this religio-aesthetic awareness contained by the metaphor *dō* which is the source of 'enchantment' that I described in the last chapter.

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<sup>4</sup> The view that Shintō and Buddhism reflected a common reality was contested by scholars in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The establishment of a register of aesthetic criteria through which participatory experience in the Zen arts could be made ‘spiritually’ meaningful appears to have taken several centuries. Artistic pursuits and aesthetic taste had developed under the patronage of elite and courtly circles prior to the arrival of Zen Buddhism, but it is not until the twelfth century, approximately six centuries after the introduction of Buddhism into Japan, that it is possible to describe artistic pursuits like *Chadō* as the means to religious transformation. The earliest concrete expression of the merging of Buddhist concepts with Japanese artistic and aesthetic interests took place in the literary arts. After three centuries of secluded development within courtly circles and monastic institutions, it was at this point that Buddhism and the arts reached out to a popular audience. The ‘Way of Poetry’ (*Kadō*) signalled this shift and heralded an increasing awareness of artistic pursuits as religious and spiritual *dō*. Many other arts followed soon after including the martial way *Kyūdō* or ‘Way of Archery’.

Two points are clear about the early history of artistic pursuits in Japan. Firstly that Japanese artistic interest and aesthetic expression always enjoyed a close connection with religion. Secondly, that the development of these arts as religio-aesthetic pursuits cannot be separated from their patronage by elite social groups like the Imperial Court.

The enthusiasm for the arts by these elite groups in the Heian period is well documented in the ‘Tale of Genji’ (*Genji Monogatari*) and was not very much concerned with their spiritual dimensions. They approached the arts as a form of ‘connoisseurship’ and in doing so point towards their secular and social dimensions. Central to the development of the ‘social aspect’ of the arts in this period as a ‘communal cultural activity, a setting within which to engage in a culture of social intercourse’ was the ‘tea ceremony’ (*chanoyu*) (Varley & Elison 1987: 189). Tea drinking had been imported from China in the early part of the Heian period by Buddhist monks who valued its medicinal properties. At the same time it enjoyed some early popularity at the court of the Heian emperor Saga (809 - 823). It only began to be appreciated as an exceptionally aesthetic pursuit much later in the



fourteenth century as part of the passion for ‘Chinese things’ (*karamono*).<sup>5</sup> Within aristocratic circles, *chanoyu* became a particularly specialised form of aesthetic expression with particular places (*kaisho*, ‘banqueting chamber’) and people (*dōbōshu*, literally ‘companions’ or connoisseurs) for practice. So closely was the tea ceremony identified with these aesthetic developments that the term *chanoyu* became synonymous with ‘connoisseurship’ (ibid: 188). But the aestheticisation of tea was not simply the result of a desire for prestige, a form of ‘conspicuous consumption’, but the result of a change in social relations. The relaxation of the differences between classes, particularly that between the ‘court’ and ‘military aristocrats’ (*kuge* and *buke*) led to an increase in the kinds of formal social events which *chanoyu* was suited to meet: ‘the most elegant social gatherings during the fourteenth century were increasingly abandoned, at least by the upper classes, in favour of more ceremonially precise behaviour on formal occasions of social intercourse. Such precision was most clearly observable in the serving of tea’ (ibid: 202-203).

The values of these elitist social gatherings were particularly ostentatious and defined by such aesthetic terms as *yūgen*, which we have come across before, *miyabi* (‘refinement’) and *yūga enrei* (‘elegant and sensuously beautiful’), all; ‘based on a sense of refinement or decorum and a viscosity of resplendent colours’ (ibid: 203). The aesthetic quality of *miyabi* was used in different ways (like *yūgen*) which it is worth briefly describing because they illustrate once again the lack of a clear distinction between the realms of the religious and the artistic, the sacred and the secular. *Myōgisho*, a dictionary of the Heian period defines the word *miyabi* with the characters *kan* (‘leisure’) and *ga* (‘refinement’), evoking the courtly refinement idealised in the hero of the ‘Tale of Genji’. But as Michelle Marra has indicated, this definition is restrictive and overlooks the meaning and use of the second character (*ga*) with its reference to a ‘secluded life’ indicative of ‘spiritual freedom’ (1991: 49). The ambiguity in the word *miyabi* meant it could refer both to a spiritual withdrawal from the world as well as to an idealization of the aesthetic values of the Heian Court.

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<sup>5</sup> Zen priests were an important part of this development, for they travelled to China and brought back these ‘Chinese things’ (*karamono*), also described as *basara*: ‘a term that implies both exoticism and ostentation’ (Varley & Elison 1987: 197).

The term could also be used as an affirmation of Confucian social values, which is evident in the writings of Yoshida Kenkō (1283 - 1330) a Zen scholar of the period. Contradictions in the use and meaning of the same aesthetic value are also apparent in their actual application to artistic practices, like *chanoyu*.

At the same time as *chanoyu*, known in its elegant form as, 'kaisho tea', was being enjoyed in aristocratic social gatherings, another form of tea, *wabi-cha* or 'poverty tea' was gradually developing.<sup>6</sup> *Wabi-cha* was influenced by its gaudier cousin but claimed to be a version of the tea ceremony directly inspired by and expressive of the concepts of Zen Buddhism. It is from Murata Shukō, the Zen abbot who is credited with the creation of *wabi-cha* that we get the famous principle *Zen cha ichimi* or 'Zen and tea are one'. Nevertheless as Varley and Elison (1981) have pointed out, the aesthetic ideals of *kaisho*-tea were extant in *wabi-cha*: 'the late medieval *wabi-cha* ceremony was based on a close association between a yearning, on the one hand, for the multi-hued and dreamlike world of the Tale of Genji and, on the other hand, the more recently cultivated liking for the earthly, monochromatic perhaps Zen inspired-values of the spiritual microcosm of the tea hut' (ibid: 209). These 'Zen inspired-values' were the values of the *wabi* aesthetic of 'poverty' and 'simplicity' but they did not immediately preclude earlier aesthetic associations. There was a shift in tastes and this is clear in the transition from the use of refined *karamono* ('Chinese things') to a reliance upon *wamono* which had an unassuming, rough and 'withered' texture. The person who finally replaced earlier aesthetic ideals like *miyabi* with *wabi* and *sabi* ('poverty' and 'rusticity') and established a new orthodoxy for the practice of tea is Sen Rikyū (1522 - 1591). In the so-called 'Rikyū revival' the teamaster Sen Rikyū and his method were established as the yardstick by which accomplishment in the tea ceremony could be measured. Rikyū studied under a disciple of Shukō and continued to develop tea as a form of Zen practice. But it would be a mistake to regard him as a spiritual recluse, for throughout his life he had strong connections with the merchant

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<sup>6</sup> *Wabi-cha*, 'poverty tea' was part of a new criteria of taste for things that were *kasuo kotan* or 'plainness and refined simplicity' (Varley & Elison 1981: 203).

community in Sakai, which was his birthplace and also the most important centre for the practice and patronage of tea.

Tea had become popular among the merchant class because it was a demonstration of their wealth and power manifested as a respected cultural accomplishment. No longer exclusively a sacred or privileged activity for monks and aristocrats, it became during the Edo period (1600 - 1868) an increasingly popular pastime among the expanding merchant community. Central to the popular enjoyment of tea was the opportunity it afforded the host or master to display their aesthetic discrimination and 'creativity'. Christine Guth has argued that in the Edo period: 'Creativity was essential to every aspect of Chanoyu' most especially in the *tori-awase* process' (1993: 464-65). The creative skill required in *tori-awase* was to select and combine all the utensils used in tea with consideration for the season, occasion, location and guests. The *tori-awase* process was an important and valued aspect of tea, but without clearly defined limits it threatened the orthodoxy established by Sen Rikyū. After the Sen Rikyū revival, *wabi-cha* was standardised in the Edo period with the establishment of three schools: *Urasenke*, *Omote Senke* and *Mushanokōji*. Every aspect of *chanoyu*, the dimensions of the tea room, the physical movements for practice and the utensils to be used were fixed. Each of the different schools had a stake in clarifying and maintaining these differences, because upon them were based their claims to authentically express Zen concepts and perpetuate Sen Rikyū's legacy.

What is important for our purposes about the challenge of creative processes (like *tori-awase*) to the standardised *wabi-cha* tea ceremony is the way they have been absorbed by the orthodoxy or tradition. Whatever tensions and differences may have existed historically between the elite aestheticism of courtly life, monastic practices in Zen temples and a popular interest in artistic practices have been subsumed by the notion of a religio-aesthetic tradition. What is at stake here is the status of the *dō* metaphor. Does it describe a constant element lying beneath socio historical changes and transformations in the Zen arts? Is it simply an ideological construction of the modern era? Or, as I am suggesting, are we looking at a succession of changing and



competing metaphors in the Zen arts? We have seen this to be the case in tea which represents both aesthetic and ascetic modes of being, and below I will outline the early history of the *Budō* or 'Martial Ways' to illustrate the same processes.

The word *Budō* comes from the Chinese classics where it refers to a range of subjects to do with the civil and martial aspects of government. In Japan it only began to take on a specialised meaning as a 'Martial Way' for cultivating spiritual and aesthetic values during the middle of the fourteenth century, around the same time that there were important changes taking place in the tea ceremony.

Until this time, systems of fighting techniques in Japan were known as *Bujutsu* or *Bugei*, meaning 'Martial Arts' and orientated towards practical combat in battlefield conditions. Changing the character *jutsu* ('art' or 'technique') to *dō*, signalled a radical change of approach to practising these techniques. Donn Draegar describes this shift as follows: 'Whereas the *bujutsu* emphasised form to be used for bringing about an effective combative result, the *budō* stressed form to be used as a means for gaining an understanding of the self, of being and of nature, and for gaining self perfection' (1973: 33). Perfecting combative techniques could be approached as a method of self-cultivation. The expression *bunbu ryōdō* or 'Both ways in letters and the martial', used during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods indicates that as a method of self cultivation the martial ways were to be regarded in the same way and alongside other 'Ways' like *Kadō* ('The Way of Poetry').<sup>7</sup>

The concept *dō* was properly applied to the practice of fighting techniques in the sixteenth century and it is in the writings of contemporary figures like Takuan (1573 - 1645), a Zen monk, that we can see its implications: 'The theory of the Japanese *bushi* (warrior) way, as expressed by Takuan, inherits the cultivation method of "*samadhi* through continual walking" (or "meditation in motion") in the tradition of ancient Buddhism (*kodai bukkyō*) and concretises it in the martial arts' (Yuasa 1993: 32).

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<sup>7</sup> *Budō* was not the only or even primary 'way' for practising fighting techniques at this time. *Bushidō* or 'The Way of the Warrior' also stressed spiritual goals to training.

Men like Takuan and the expert swordsman Tsukahara Bokuden (1490 - 1571) stressed that the martial disciplines be learnt by the same psychological method that characterised the *Shugyō* practices of esoteric and Zen Buddhism. This meant that the movements chosen to make up the repertoire of technique in any of the martial disciplines were those that demanded the most concentration and were not necessarily the most functional (Draegar 1973: 33). The aim in practising these martial techniques was to dedicate oneself completely to the activity. The sense of this dedication is conveyed by the phrase *karadagoto* which means to do something using the whole body, but also carries the connotation of the English 'body and soul' - (Arifuku Kōgaku 1991: 219-220). The emphasis on cultivating the body does not exclude the 'self'. We saw earlier that Buddhist methods of self-cultivation were based on a somatic philosophy in which there was no distinction between 'body' and 'self'. The Japanese word for the body, *mi*, can also mean 'self' or 'I' and there is a saying which illustrates this: *mi o sutete koso, ukabu se mo are*: 'One can help oneself only when one leaves one's body - that is, gives up the small egotistical I' (ibid: 220).

What we are looking at here is neither 'materialism' (the mind reduced to the body) nor spiritualism (the body reduced to the mind) but a theory of a 'third term' which does not make that distinction between mind and body (Kasulis 1993: 301). This is the theory of *ki*<sup>8</sup> which is a form of 'energy' described by Yasuo Yuasa as being both a psychological and a physiological phenomenon (1993: xxiv). It is perhaps better described as an extraordinary state of consciousness arising from the 'sensations of the body' (*shintai kankaku*). To realise this state of consciousness which is tied to the body's condition and not simply a somatic theory, was referred to earlier by the expression *sokushin jōbutsu* meaning ('enlightenment with this very body'). By engaging the body in the practice of the physical 'forms' (*katachi*) we find in activities like the martial ways it is possible to manifest the mind-body complex (*ki*) of which, in terms of Buddhist metaphysics, we are already a part. The precise role of the body in this process of becoming enlightened is defined by Thomas Kasulis as an issue of

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<sup>8</sup> The word *ki* is used in a wide range of Japanese expressions to describe different states of mind (Kasulis 1993: 306).



'praxis' and an issue of 'style': 'First praxis is the process by which we become what we already are. And what are we? A mind-body complex that is in internal relation with the mind-body or spirit-matter complex of the universe. Secondly: 'Mental-physical praxis is not simply the path to enlightenment, but it is also itself the expression of enlightenment' (1993: 311-312).

The issue of 'style' connects and makes visible the mind-body complex (*ki*) of the practitioner through certain 'forms' (*katachi/kata*). What this means for the martial ways is that their postures and movements are selected, fixed and standardised in such a 'style' that their exact imitation required the performer to exhibit an 'enlightened' somatic attitude. These forms are a means of evaluating the quality of any performers 'energy' (*ki*) through its physical expression (ibid: 313-316). Treated in this way, monastic and artistic practices are all different variations of the same search for enlightenment. For the philosopher Motoori Norinaga (1730 - 1801) in the Edo period it was the aesthetic form of particular words rather than bodily gestures which functioned as expressions of *kokoro* ('spirit')<sup>9</sup>. According to Norinaga's aesthetic theory the 'spirit of words' (*kotodama*) was released in the 'creative act of poeticising', that is by 'our being so in touch with things that we become touched by them' (ibid: 313, 309).

Aesthetic criteria are also applied to the martial ways, but unlike their application in poetry never led to them being regarded as a form of social amusement. The warrior class (*buke*) had begun to adopt the aesthetic language of the court as early as the twelfth century. Donn Draegar notes that they used the term *miyabi* 'to include the expert skill in the fighting arts' and that the poet Fujiwara Teika (1162 - 1241) even established ten categories of beauty with reference to the classical *Budō*. Most interesting of all perhaps is the term *yūgen* which was used here to 'postulate a balance of visual and aural aspects of technique. The visual aspects such as form, are, as signs or symbols, useful to show the relation of the concept of *yūgen* aesthetic ideal

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<sup>9</sup> *Kokoro* is an extremely difficult word to translate because it has been used so variously. Thomas Kasulis argues that for Norinaga it has come close to the German word *geist* meaning 'mind' and spirit (1993: 309).



- to the classical *budō* (1973: 37,39). The application of these aesthetic qualities to the martial ways suggests that the combative 'forms' (*kata*) were regarded as having aesthetic as well as spiritual value. This is particularly evident during the extended peace of the Edo period, when the warrior nobility or Samurai enjoyed a leisurely and refined lifestyle. The concept of 'martial arts' (*bujutsu/bugei*) changed and they were appreciated alongside more literary and artistic pursuits like the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) and calligraphy (*shōdō*). But just as important as their aesthetic and spiritual qualities was the encapsulation in the martial ways of a moral and ethical code known as *bushidō*, the 'way of the warrior'. The development of moral and ethical aspects was part of the adaptation to the martial ways of Neo-Confucian principles of loyalty, filial piety and respect for the social order. There was no philosophical conflict with the concepts of Buddhism which shared many of the same goals and methods. Within the Wang Yang Ming system of Confucianism there was a direct method of spiritual self cultivation which, like Zen concepts, stressed the importance of 'intuition' rather than 'knowledge' and 'dedication to a systematic physical endeavour' (ibid: 23).

By the end of the Edo period, the martial ways expressed the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical/moral qualities of a number of different religious philosophies: Shintō, Buddhist and Confucian. It is difficult for a single metaphor like *dō* to contain and control all this complexity. One way of reconciling these differences is to identify an underlying theme in the history of these changing metaphors. This is a theme of gradually increasing rationalisation in the organisation and forms of practices of the Zen arts. In the original concept of *dō*, as it has been defined by Konishi Jin'ichi (1975), the standardisation of technique and establishment of fixed ideals is one of three key aspects.

The founder of Shingon Buddhism, Kūkai (779 - 835), whilst insisting on a direct, intuitive method of transmitting *dō*, also classified Buddhist concepts into a hierarchy of experiential states. Another hierarchy relating to *dō*, this time categorising the value of styles of *waka* poetry was created in the eleventh century by the poet

Fujiwara Kintō (Thornhill 1993: 9). During the medieval period, progress in the Zen arts was patterned according to a fixed three-part model, based on Buddhist concepts. In the first stage (*shū*), the new practitioner astutely copies the established forms. The next stage (*ha*) involves the internalisation of these models. Finally after perhaps a lifetime of practice, in the third stage (*ri*) the practitioner is able to manifest the essence of the form as a projection of their own self. These kinds of hierarchical schemes had a direct effect on the concept of *dō*, as Arthur Thornhill writes: 'this sense of progression, of stages along the Way, becomes an important aspect of the typologies presented in literary and art theory. As the notion of *michi* (*dō*) develops in the medieval age, artists are increasingly constrained by convention and orthodoxy, yet at the same time artistic accomplishment implicitly has soteriological value' (1993: 9).

Both Zeami Motokiyo (1363 - 1443) in the field of *Nō* theatre and Sen Rikyū in *wabi-cha* achieved their positions of importance partly because they codified in detail the standards for practice and progress in their respective forms. This process was repeated in the reorganisation of the martial arts as *Budō* and *Bushidō*, which also reflects the influence of state power on the operation of the Zen arts. The systems for ordering the martial ways, tea and *Nō* theatre in particular, were arranged hierarchically, according to Neo-Confucian principles. As William Lafleur has indicated there was a 'coalescence' between the cosmic order of medieval Buddhism upon which the arts were originally modelled to the social order of Edo period Confucianism (1983: 143-144). It was a shift from an hierarchy of value to the value of hierarchy.

The increasing rationalisation of the Zen arts was not only the consequence of different philosophical models, but also of changing social conditions. During the Edo period there was a huge expansion in the numbers and classes of people practising the arts. This was the outcome of urbanisation, the creation of surplus wealth, high rates of literacy, a transportation and communication network and an 'attitude of conspicuous cultural liberality' (Nosco 1990: 18). Enthusiasm for the arts was at its

height in the Genroku era (1688 - 1704) and centred on the city of Edo where there was the highest concentration of people and wealth. As Peter Nosco indicated with the expression 'conspicuous cultural liberality', the arts were not the preserve of any one particular group. The 'arts' included activities for entertainment (*yūgei*) and for self-cultivation (*bugei* - martial arts). But during this period the distinction was eroded to the point where all these activities were known as *geidō* ('artistic ways'). There is one further classification of artistic activity: the *taishu geinō* or 'popular performing arts' which it is important to mention because they were the most numerous and widely participated in. *Taishu geinō* are forms of 'popular culture' and different from the Zen arts because they are 'self-supporting and sustaining, that is those forms that require neither the financial patronage nor independent wealth of the producer of the culture' (ibid: 16). The social and economic circumstances which gave rise to these forms of popular culture had an impact on the classification of the Zen arts. An inventory published in 1775 lists seventy-four types of 'leisure' activity including everything from martial arts and the tea ceremony to types of street music and performance (Nishiyama 1997: 48). There were associations (*bunka shakai* - 'cultural communities') which formed around the participants of these activities, some were relatively unstructured and self-supporting, others were highly organised and patronised. The structured activities were those like the Zen arts, considered to be of a 'cultured' nature (*kyōyō*) and not purely for 'entertainment and amusement' (*goraku*).

Expansion in popular forms of entertainment in the Genroku era made the Zen arts less exclusive and weakened their spiritual claims. The Zen arts came to be distinguished through their institutional forms (as an ordered system), rather than by their aesthetic and spiritual philosophies. They were closely associated with the rise of private academies during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. These academies began as centres for the 'civilisation' of the Samurai, but by the end of the eighteenth century were centres of education 'marketing scholarship to willing consumers who derived personal enrichment or professional advancement through their training' (Nosco 1990: 33, 279). But the formal establishment of a system for organising and marketing the 'traditional cultural forms' (*igeri*) of the arts had taken

place before the rise of the private academy. This was the *iemoto* (patriarchal) system, which in functional terms is a hierarchically organised patron/client system of instruction, usually run along family lines.

The *iemoto* system began in the fifteenth century as a means of organising the arts practised by the aristocratic and warrior communities. However, the system which has survived until today emerged after the Genroku era when there were large numbers of people taking up artistic pastimes. The *iemoto* replaced the *dō* metaphor, reinventing its religio-aesthetic tradition by treating the transmission of the 'way' as 'filiation'. Through the metaphor of kinship (*iemoto*), the practice of the Zen arts became constrained within an institutional matrix of power and authority. As Paul Varley has written: 'Establishment of the Iemoto system as Yūgei during the eighteenth century was clearly an effort to fix the traditions of these acts and prevent heresies from arising among their followers'. It also 'represented an attempt to harness and profit from the large clientele for these elegant pastimes' (Varley 1989: 173).

Practice and progress in the Zen arts was now more than a question of aesthetic taste and spiritual cultivation and linked to a hierarchical ranking system. It was within and through this system rather than the religio-aesthetic dimensions of practice evoked by the metaphor *dō* that practitioners took part in the Zen arts. The *iemoto* had an overt politico-economic dimension as the student registered on entry and continuously qualified their relationship with the school and its members by the regular payment of fees. Identification with a particular individual as a repository of aesthetic sensibilities and spiritual wisdom was superseded by the exigencies of their rank as 'Senior' (*sempai*), or 'Master' (*sensei*), and role as the communicator of forms of 'knowledge'.

The status and transmission of the knowledge based on practice and experience which had substantiated the relatedness of any school's members gradually adapted to more instrumental methods of communication. A leading authority, Nishiyama

Matsunosuke has described this most important aspect of the development of the *iemoto* from *yūgei* as the shift from the practices of ‘complete transmission’ (*kanzen sōden*) to ‘limited transmission’ (*fukanzen sōden*) (cited by Varley 1989: 165). These terms describe a process of rationalisation from an intuitive and affective teaching and learning relationship to one framed and mediated by ‘Role’, ‘Hierarchy’ and the technical criteria for progression.

Changes in the nature and method of transmission were not only the consequences of the emergence of the *iemoto* system but were preceded by the transgression of *hiden*, the secret, handwritten information passed from master to disciple. The publication of the first book on tea in 1626 initiated the dissemination and later, contestation of knowledge as different interpretations vied for ‘authenticity’. No longer privileged by being hidden and affective, knowledge in textual later, visual forms (drawings and photographs) was available to those who could afford the money and time to invest in it. Once within the public domain the power and authority of any school of *Chadō* or *Budō* rested on its ability to preserve and control the transmission of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> This right became the substantive basis for the idea of an authentic religio-aesthetic tradition in the Zen arts. It was a tradition that had been expressed in and through the metaphor *dō*, and was now replaced by the *iemoto* institution. But, as the ‘Tradition’ every *iemoto*’s authority was contested, not only by other *iemoto*, but by the rise of ‘Mass Culture’ in the post-Meiji (from 1868) period which appropriated many of the icons and much of the symbolic vocabulary that set the *iemoto* system apart.

The emergence of the *dō* metaphor in the medieval era and the *iemoto* system in the eighteenth century are attempts to establish a tradition for the Zen arts; efforts which continue today in the ‘culture centre’ (*karuchā sentā*). Like the *iemoto* system, the culture centre has explicit social, political and economic dimensions. Arising out of the ‘Leisure Boom’ in the 1970’s and 1980’s, the culture centre is organised and maintained by large media organisations like NHK and Asahi and department stores

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<sup>10</sup> An example of this which Nishiyama (1997: 32) cites is of the *Ogasawara* ‘school’ (*ryū*) of the ‘martial arts’ (*Bujutsu*) in the Edo period whose claim to authority was based on its codification and publication of rules and standards for practice.

like Hankyu and Mitsukoshi. As such, they are administrated as part of the 'Culture Industry' (Adorno 1984), and are now the most popular and convenient means for Japanese urbanites to engage in 'Traditional Pastimes' (*dentō tekina mono*), as well as modern and foreign diversions (Moriya 1984).

The history of the Zen arts in the 'modern period' (post Meiji - 1868 and particularly the post-war years) is inseparable from the rise of mass cultural forms like the culture centre. This is part of a wider historical process where, as we have seen, the constitution and expression of 'tradition' in the Zen arts is contestable and contested. The constructed nature and socio-historical particularity of tradition are all evident in the case of *Shorinji Kempo*, one of the 'Martial Ways' (*Budō*) and the 'youngest' of the Zen arts in this study. *Shorinji Kempo* is one of the more popular martial ways, sometime known as the 'modern way' because of its relatively late creation in 1948. The founder, Doshin So initially wished to teach his particular interpretation of Zen Buddhism - *Kongo Zen* ('Diamond Zen'), but found it easier to attract followers if he taught them martial techniques. In the creation of *Shorinji Kempo*, many ideas and symbols of Japanese tradition were appropriated and refashioned. This process was similar and related to the post-war *Shinkō Shūkyō* or 'New Religions' which reinvented aspects of indigenous tradition and adapted foreign and 'modern' elements. Whilst this kind of syncretism is characteristic of Japanese religiosity (Swyngedouw 1986) the emergence and rise to popularity of *Shorinji Kempo* as one of the 'modern' *Budō* cannot be understood separately from the sociohistorical context of the post war period.

It was only with the rationalisation and reformation, first of *Jūdō* ('The soft way') under Kanō Jigorō and later of the other martial ways, that the immediate post-war ban on all activities perceived to be connected with Japan's imperial past was relaxed. The integrity of *Shorinji Kempo* as a Zen art and its position in the public imagination, rests on an ability not only to adapt within contemporary institutional structures, but also to establish a version of tradition in a period of rapid social change and industrialisation. These are all issues I shall return to in chapter seven.



This brief critical history has aimed both to construct an identity for the Zen arts and to dislodge the notion of a singular tradition by exposing the teleological assumptions that lie behind the notion of a seamless transmission of knowledge. The meaning of a given symbolic system like the Zen arts is always plural, and cannot be reduced to the historical circumstances of its emergence, or to the surface appearances of its contemporary representations.

We have seen shifts in the locus of value from the Buddhist temple to elite courtly life, from a Confucian idea of a moral and ethical education to mass culture and modern leisure. The transformations, multiple influences and disjunctures in time that are the history of the Zen arts show the notion of its tradition to be very problematic. As Bernard Faure notes in his highly original 'epistemological critiques' of the Zen/Ch'an tradition; 'the term itself implies that there are things to be transmitted, *tradita*, that there is a continuity, an orthodoxy, and that departures from it lead to heterodoxy, or even worse, heresy' (1993: 9).

But there are other competing traditions, most notably within Zen itself, based on the claim that any representative form necessarily dilutes the quality of pure experience. The metaphors by which the tradition of the Zen arts is constituted and perpetuated are referentially ambiguous. In the history of representing the Zen arts which was outlined in chapter one, we saw that there has been little sensitivity to the symbolic domination of certain terms like *dō*. By outlining the history of these terms, I have aimed to show why it is important to define the way they are being used and understood in any sociohistorical context. It is a point clearly made by John McRae: 'Religious practices were deeply affected by sociological changes in the community; actually the ritual identification of the Zen adept to the patrilineal lineage (Iemoto), first through ordination, later through the 'seal of approval' and the certificate of authentication given by the master came to replace the traditional notion of the 'Path' of 'Dō' (McRae quoted in Faure 1991: 22).

The same argument applies to terms like *sensei* ('Teacher') for, as Bernard Faure has demonstrated, the teachers of activities like the Zen arts are not masters because they have realised the truth and now teach it; although this may of course be the case. Rather, they can teach the truth because they have been defined as 'teachers' (*sensei*). What they teach has the 'performative power' of being the truth. Faure makes a useful comparison with the 'author function' analysed by Foucault and what in respect to Zen and the Zen arts may be called the 'master function' (1991: 22). A 'position' like 'teacher' acquires a broad social consensus and performative power through its representation in an authoritative discourse. Of course this is only partly the case, for a teacher is also able to command respect and establish authority through individual and personal qualities.

The increasing importance of title and rank in the Zen arts seems paradoxical to its religio-aesthetic ideas which emphasise that it is the body, that is any body which participates. It is a reflection of the changing locus of the power to represent and evaluate the Zen arts. This power is predominantly located in the institutions which organise practice, and in the textual and visual media which aim to portray the forms of the Zen arts as knowledge.

With the formation of the *iemoto* system and more recently the culture centre we can detect a significant paradigm shift from the personal to the organisational. Within institutional formations of power and authority, the rules and idioms that serve to enhance and legitimate that authority tend to be the most highly valued. We can also detect in this shift a change in performance, which is judged by instrumental rather than aesthetic criteria. Technical skills are replacing aesthetic performance as an objective means to progression.

We can also detect a similar shift in attitudes towards practice and the body which is judged according to instrumental rather than aesthetic and spiritual criteria. The idea of performance as a technical skill for the body to enact is beginning to replace religio-aesthetic considerations.

But at no point have these prior and contrary meanings been eliminated as a potential significance for the individual practitioner. They co-exist, albeit uneasily, and in the next chapter I will begin to explore this unease in the context of my own ethnography. Initially, I will concentrate on the role of the body in the question of the relationship between formal aesthetic criteria and individual sensory experience.

## Chapter 3

### From the Anthropology of Experience to an Anthropology of Aesthetics

In most interpretations of what participants are required to do when they take part in the Zen arts, it is the structural and symbolic qualities of practice which are emphasised. These investigations are usually based on sustained periods of participation, and claim to speak for the experiences of others who practise. This is the basis of my own approach, and, like the other anthropologists who have studied the Zen arts, I am concerned to describe and account for what goes on when a practitioner takes part in these ordered and disciplined regimes. What happens to a participant in the process of gradually becoming familiar with the movements they must perform?

At the beginning, every aspect of practice may be unfamiliar. Experienced practitioners can recall being almost paralysed with ‘embarrassment’ (*hazukashii*), by their lack of knowledge during their early studies. There is nothing which a new student can do without being told when and how to perform. Observation skills and an ability to imitate with the body are very important because most teaching is done by demonstration, with very little verbal instruction. This process of ‘remembering with the body’ (*Karada de oboeru*) never stops, but once the basic ‘grammar’ of movement has been acquired, which is to say not the details but the correct order of movements then participants speak of how their initial embarrassment disappears.

To extend the analogy with language and grammar, they can now ‘speak’ to others through the form of their movement, even if rather inexpertly. The basic forms for interacting with the environment and with others: methods of standing, sitting, and making gestures of greeting, are fundamental in this respect. New students may not know any of the intricacies of the movements they are being required to perform but

they demonstrate their willingness to learn and respect for the situation by standing, sitting, and greeting each other correctly.

It is interesting that the moments during training when no movement or behaviour is required are the most difficult for practitioners to negotiate. During *Chadō* there are no such moments, but in *Shorinji Kempo* there are usually one or two 'rest periods' (*kyū kei*), lasting perhaps five or ten minutes. Participants are never quite sure just how relaxed it is permissible to be, and tend to drift about the room. Once the class resumes, there is a structure and an order of physical forms into which practitioners can, as it were, 'fit' themselves.

From the moment that a practitioner enters a training environment, almost every action, every word and if some interpretations are to be believed, every significant thought, is determined. It is not proper to ask why the body should be compelled to act only and always in certain ways and what purpose is served by addressing one another in prescribed, polite forms of language. To do so is to question why one participates at all. What is important is to copy and repeat willingly what senior members and the teacher demonstrate, and to sustain the effort even when one forgets the correct form or makes mistakes. In terms of the religio-aesthetic orthodoxy, this is the 'way' (*dō*) to cultivate and transform the self. According to another discourse,<sup>1</sup> it is also the way that the structure of training mirrors and perpetuates the structure of Japanese social relations.

When I have asked participants why they practice the Zen arts, what the Zen arts are for and how their internal features operate, their answers are often constructed in terms of the religio-aesthetic theory and vocabulary of the Zen arts. They use terms like: *Shugyō* ('self cultivation'), *Seishin Kyōiku* ('spiritual education') and *Okeikogoto* ('aesthetic pursuits') which, if taken literally suggest religio-aesthetic motives for taking part. Anthropologists have responded to these kinds of

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<sup>1</sup> This discourse has to do with the Neo-Confucian influence on the Zen arts which, as we saw in chapter two, gave them a role as models of ideal social relations.

explanations with functionalist and structuralist interpretations, and predominantly treat the Zen arts as a form of ritual.

William Colby writes of the 'psycho-cultural function' of *Chadō*, arguing that it is a model for ideal social relations and a mechanism for working through 'anxieties in the sphere of social relations' (Colby 1991: 252).

The art historian, Kendall Brown, adopts a structuralist approach, drawing on a previous application of Victor Turner's theory of ritual anti-structure to *Chadō*: 'As a communal ritual that creates an antistructure where members of different social classes and ranks are temporarily made equal (or nearly so) in the pursuit of a shared experience, the tea gathering subverts the social order but, by doing so within the circumscribed context of ritual, serves as an outlet for social tensions' (Brown 1997: 63).

Finally, in the most exhaustive study by an anthropologist of the 'Japanese tea ritual', Jennifer Andersen adopts both functional and structuralist perspectives to explain how it is that by following a 'predetermined course of action'. ... 'ritual practitioners achieve their desired ends' (Anderson 1991: 129). These 'desired ends' are either to 'confirm' the social and cosmic order or to 'transform' it in response to the threat of internal or external change (ibid: 6).

By treating the Zen arts as a form of ritual, a great deal has been learnt about its symbolic codes and structures, and the relations of these to Japanese social organisation. It is my argument that there is little left to say about this aspect of the Zen arts by adding to what has already been stated in terms of 'ritual'. A ritual approach is valid, but not for the kind of question I want to ask.

The Zen arts operate on different levels. As a ritual structure, they are a model of formal social relationships, a vehicle to achieve a state of enlightenment, and an expression of refined aesthetic sensibilities. But there are other things going on which



need to be addressed, such as the way in which individuals participate in and perceive these ideas.

The individuals whom I met and practised with during the fieldwork for this thesis only ascribed religio-aesthetic qualities or functions to *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo* when I asked them direct questions. More often than not, they were reluctant to speak, uninterested, or in some cases ignorant of these matters. When they conversed with each other, the topic hardly ever arose. One of the things they did note, was that each centre for training in a Zen art like *Shorinji Kempo* worked in a slightly different way. Each teacher interpreted the theory and philosophy of their discipline according to their own experience as well as to the orthodoxy. Discovering, negotiating, and making sense of these differences was an integral part of the experience of participation. But it was difficult to ask participants about these experiences or even, initially, recognise their importance, because most of the occasions when we met were during practice when almost every aspect of behaviour is predetermined and standardised. For an individual to talk about their own perceptions of the orthodoxy and exceptions to it was rare, because this could appear disruptive.

There is another level of experience common to every participant which it is even more difficult to reach, and only possible to explore by active participation over a long period of time. This is the experience of the body's responses in the context of the Zen arts as a religio-aesthetic practice for cultivating the self.

What I want to address in this chapter is how these embodied experiences are connected to the religio-aesthetic qualities and experience ideally attributed to performance. This is a development of the understanding reached in the last chapter, of the history of the Zen arts as a series of contradictory and competing metaphors. Here I will show that examining the manner in which the Zen arts integrate individual and embodied perceptions within their aesthetic register also gives an insight into how, as a metaphor, the Zen arts reconcile the contradictions and differences of their historical experience.

The question is how aesthetic value is attributed to performative acts and how these relate to the sensate experience of embodying these acts. Talking about the Zen arts in terms of aesthetics does not obviate the need for clarity of definition, nor of an analysis in terms of ritual. But it does, I shall argue, focus this inquiry on the relationship of the act and its supporting structure and philosophy, to individual experience.

Anthropological theories of experience are the legacy of Victor Turner who successfully applied Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of *Erlebnis* to his own fieldwork in Africa (1967, 1985). Turner's central concern, the relationship of experience to expression, remains crucial in current anthropological discussions (Lavie, Narayan & Rosaldo 1993).

In respect of the Zen arts, I use the term 'expression' to mean not only the actual physical act of making tea or performing a martial technique, but also the philosophy that describes and edifies that act. In the anthropology of experience, expression structures experience and experience structures expression. There is a dialogical and dialectical relation between the two. What this means is that we cannot hope to understand what is going on in the Zen arts by identifying and isolating a certain body of knowledge and then imagine that it can account for both historical changes and individual experience. There is a relationship between this body of knowledge and the various contexts in which it is manifested, including the body. It is this sensory dimension I want to explore here as an aspect of aesthetics.

Usually, 'aesthetics' is associated with discussions of 'High Art', with our cultured responses to painting, music, poetry, and the like. Contemporary discussions about aesthetics are dominated by debates about the disenchanting effects of modernism and of new technologies on art. Within the intellectual and philosophical context of these debates, aesthetic considerations are not 'everyday' considerations but are elevated to an 'artistic' status and politically charged as 'Culture'. Influential intellectuals like

Walter Benjamin (1973) and Theodor Adorno (1984) applied the concept of aesthetics not to sensate, practical experience, but firstly to artistic and cultural forms.

But there is another, more original and less rarefied way of understanding and using 'aesthetics'. The etymology of the term itself is from the Greek *aisthitikos*, meaning 'perceptive by feeling'. As Terry Eagleton has stated: 'Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the Body' (1990: 13).... It is a form of cognition, achieved through the senses: taste, touch, hearing, seeing and smell.

The second sense<sup>2</sup> of 'aesthetics' brings us to a connection with what Turner called 'experience'. Aesthetics, understood as the sensory perception of being in the world, is important to recognise and describe because it focuses on the experience of participation by asking how practitioners feel and respond to stimuli. It shows how experience is conditioned by the act of embodying movement, as well as by the formal aesthetic value of movement. It is not possible to gain access to this kind of understanding by merely interviewing practitioners. Experiencing the sensory dimension only comes through active participation. Not only must one practise, but one must also be continually attentive to the sensory experience of contact with others and with one's environment. During *Chadō*, it is through being conscious of one's self, watching and listening to the sound of the utensils being used in the preparation of the beverage, and tasting the bitterness of the green tea, that this kind of understanding is possible.

The physical repertoires of all the Zen arts are designed to sensitise the body and heighten its physical awareness. But the development of an aesthetic sensibility is constructed not only from an awareness of the physicality of experience, but also on the valuation of these experiences. A 'perception by feeling' of the bitterness of tea, and of the trickle of water from wooden ladle to clay tea bowl do not comprise just a singular aesthetic quality, a quality that could be either present or absent, but can be

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<sup>2</sup> In order to avoid confusing two usages of the same term I will refer to the second sense of 'aesthetics': of the ability to feel or perceive, using other terms.

appreciated as part of an aesthetic register. In other words, the experience that comes through participation has varying intensities of value.

What does it mean to say that the Zen arts have aesthetic value? We may mean that they are beautiful. The ideal of beauty in *Chadō* is expressed by the term *wabi*, which Sōshitsu Sen XV, Grandmaster of the *Urasenke* school of *Chadō* defines as follows: 'The foundation of the way of tea is based on the aesthetic of Wabi, which sometimes has been translated as rusticity. But this aesthetic should not be confused with a love of the rustic. Wabi is a state of mind. It is better expressed by words such as frugality, simplicity and humility' (1979, 72).

In *Shorinji Kempo*, we find the same kind of metaphysical language. The qualities to be valued in performance include *mushin* or a state of 'no mind', *seishin* or 'spirit' and most importantly *ki* ('psycho physical-energy'). With these terms it is possible to talk both of a register of aesthetic value applied to the physical properties of movement and of states of mind, because they are based on a theory where mind-body dualism is redundant. All these terms are defined as mental states, but they are used as aesthetic qualities to be valued in performance. If we focus on the way in which these terms are used as if they referred to qualities inherent in the acts, we can still talk properly of the Zen arts as having aesthetic value. I shall argue that the Zen arts have continued to be valued because of the referential capacity of this aesthetic register. In different contexts they may have cultural and political significance. Indeed, the very idea of the aesthetic in the Zen arts as a realm of self-contained value has ideological significance.

But to say that the Zen arts have aesthetic value is not the same thing as saying that they inevitably bring about certain kinds of responses in participants. What we are looking at here is the relation between sensate experience and a system of valuation. We are now in a position to qualify what should be understood by the term 'expression' when referring to the Zen arts. 'Expression' refers to two aspects of the technical system, the physical repertoire and the aesthetic code. Concerning the

repertoires of movements that make up the physical substrate of the Zen arts: this is a system of movement with explicit criteria laid down for correct execution. In the past this knowledge was only known by seniors and teachers, but is now much more widely available. These criteria are a series of principles about how to move the body correctly. In *Chadō* this body of knowledge is known as *temae*. Learning *temae* means a total physical commitment to correct form, even if the student is not sure quite how or why they should move in this particular way. This is necessary because the procedure for making tea is very complex and much of the detail appears superfluous. It is important, therefore, that learning is staggered and progress towards mastering the correct procedure is marked by examinations which require the student to acquire knowledge gradually.

In *Shorinji Kempo*, the purpose of any movement is much clearer, for the techniques must not only be beautiful, they should be functional as well. It is not enough to make the correct shapes, an opponent's attack must be avoided and countered effectively. Therefore the criteria for correct procedures are rational and known to students as *Atemi go no sen*: 'the five points of attack and defence. They are: (i) Attack the weak points of the body, (ii) Awareness of speed, (iii) Awareness of distance, (iv) Awareness of angle, (v) Awareness of strategy. Some of this vocabulary is purely technical, but other terms refer to the aesthetic qualities of movement. The physical properties of movement to which the technical vocabulary refers are not in themselves aesthetic qualities but differences. These are differences like those in *Shorinji Kempo* between 'hard' (*Gō*) and 'soft' (*Jū*), 'weak points' (*kyō*) and 'strong points' (*jitsu*), and in *Chadō*, between 'symmetry' and 'asymmetry' (*wabi-sabi*). These differences form the basis for the distinctions which make up the register of aesthetics and of states of mind. In *Chadō*, the differences between symmetry and asymmetry are one of the bases for understanding *wabi* which also has the aesthetic sense of 'rustic' or unpolished. The terms *kyō* ('weak points') and *Jitsu* ('strong points'), make a technical distinction which is important to the 'strategy' of performing *Shorinji Kempo*, but which also describes a difference of mental states: 'The dichotomy

between 'being and non-being' is actually one between 'weak points' (*kyo*) and 'strong points' (*jitsu*) (Takehiko 1997: 320).

Every practitioner has to learn how to evaluate the properties of movement, for example to distinguish *jitsu* from *kyo*. It takes a lot of time and effort to become sensitive to the kinds of subtle gradations in physical movement which characterise this distinction and even longer to equate them to 'states of mind'. *Jitsu* and *kyo* can refer to the total number of techniques a practitioner of *Shorinji Kempo* has acquired and their ability to perform them. It can also refer to the aspects of any technique on its own, or at its most instinctive level to an awareness of how to move and perform effectively when performing with another practitioner; in other words, what their strong points are in relation to your own.

Initially, all movement is understood on the basis of technical distinctions. That is how a student learns, by being told an action is too fast or too slow, too hard or too soft. But it is while learning to make these distinctions that all practitioners acquire the aesthetic vocabulary to appreciate other dimensions of movement and potentially to create other meanings.

Both the technical and aesthetic registers for evaluating performance are related to the actual sensory experience of practice, but not equivalent to it. In the process of technical and aesthetic evaluation, only those aspects of sensory experience which fit these criteria are acknowledged. The physical properties of practice have an effect on the senses but it is the process of aesthetic transformation, of applying a particular vocabulary to these experiences, which gives them religious and cultural value.

If we accept that there are two aspects to expression within the Zen arts, then what is the relation between the act as a technical system and as an aesthetic genre. Alfred Gell has argued that among the Trobriand islanders of Papua New Guinea artistic activity can be understood as a technical system. In a discussion of canoe building he distinguishes between the physical techniques required and the aesthetic value of this



process. Canoe building 'is not dazzling as a physical object but as a display of artistry explicable only in magical terms' (1992: 46). Without an aesthetic vocabulary there is little possibility for edifying the process; the building of a canoe, like the performance of a Zen art, is a technical act.<sup>3</sup>

Many practitioners of *Shorinji Kempo* today appreciate the value to be found in practising the Zen arts as a technical system. That is to say, they take enjoyment from finding out about the mechanics of movement and being able to reproduce them as a performance. This makes sense in a martial system where there is a functional or combative application to every movement. But it is an approach that has met with resistance from those who feel that without maintaining an aesthetic attitude to practice, *Shorinji Kempo* will no longer be *Budō*, a 'Martial Way'.

In the case of examinations in *Chadō* which are designed to test a particular body of knowledge, technical criteria are also important. But the specific properties of green tea as a beverage, its purely 'functional' aspect so to speak, does not appear to have a bearing on the way the performance is structured. There is a value in the performance which is technically correct, conforming to instrumental principles. This kind of performance is required to pass examinations, so it is prestigious and affirms the hierarchy of grades established by these examinations.

Ultimately, it is not the criteria for the creation of the technique which lend the movements, either in *Chadō* or *Shorinji Kempo*, aesthetic value but the way they are attended to. As Gell goes on to say about Trobriand canoe building, it is the way art objects are understood to have been manifested, their 'becoming rather than their being', which is the source of enchantment. In looking at the nature of aesthetic experience we are looking at a way of attending to an object or technique. In the Zen

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to make a distinction between 'technique' and 'skill'. According to the religio-aesthetic theories of the Zen arts, skill is beyond technique and not defined by intention. It is an expression of a particular inner state (*Shinjutsu*): 'When effort is exerted in the course of performing some skill; it becomes that skill . . . What is the subjective nature of physical effort and skill? It is *Ki*' (Takehiko 1997: 298).

arts this approach to action is called *kata* or 'form'. An attitude to action based on this *kata* style of movement distinguishes an aesthetic expression from a technical act and lifts the performance out of the mundane and into an enchanted realm.

Aesthetic value cannot be enshrined in performance principles, otherwise merely to perform the technique mechanically would be sufficient. To understand how the body is involved in this *kata* style we must be attentive to what Andrew Strathern calls in his discussion of the concept of 'embodiment', 'the being that resides in doing, that issues from and is expressed only in doing' (1996: 202). Only then can we understand something about the aesthetic nature of experience in the Zen arts.

Above, I have been concerned to show how the aesthetic vocabulary which makes up that discourse is translated into technical criteria for performance. There are two points here: firstly, that by understanding how aesthetic value is expressed for an individual who performs, we can also understand how other kinds of values, social and cultural, may be represented as well. Secondly, aesthetic value does not reside in, nor is it unique to particular actions: not to *Chadō* nor to *Shorinji Kempo*. Aesthetic value resides in a way of practising, but also needs a sufficiently sophisticated and demanding repertoire of movement to realise and manifest that value.

We have identified three interrelated aspects of the Zen arts: the sensory, the aesthetic and the technical, and have explored some of the connections between them. In the following section, I will expand upon and illustrate the relations between these aspects by using different accounts of the same event. I will give two separate versions of *Chadō* and of a technique from the *Shorinji Kempo* repertoires. In each case, one of these accounts is based on my own experience of taking part and interacting with others. Although my levels of skill in *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo* are quite different I do not believe this significantly effects the validity of my approach.

The experience of any beginner will be different to that of a skilled practitioner, but both beginner and expert are caught in the same relationship: which comprises their

experience, the criteria for action, and an aesthetic register. The quality of these relationships will inevitably change, but I shall argue that they are always present. 'My' experience, as both skilled and unskilled practitioner, is inseparable from my relationships with other practitioners (and therefore not purely 'mine') and with the environment. This is no different for the other practitioners whom I know. The purpose of focusing on my relationship is not to exclude or ignore others but to highlight how they are similarly connected. Further, the difference between 'my' experience and that of others in neuro-physiological terms is not significant. In this sense, the differences between young and old, male and female, fit and unfit, are at least as important as those between myself as a foreign anthropologist and Japanese others. The significant differences which do exist between all practitioners are in the aesthetic value judgements they make about performances.

The venue where I began the practice of *Chadō* and flower-arranging during the period of fieldwork for this thesis is in Bentenchō, a depressed area of Osaka city. It is an uninspiring venue located at the end of a long, narrow alleyway, surrounded by low rent housing. For anyone like myself who has images of old wooden tea-houses in serene gardens, the nondescript concrete building is unexpected and disappointing. But 'at least' as the common refrain from students went 'it is cheap, close to the underground station and therefore convenient'.

Drawing back the sliding door and stepping into the small entranceway, the student is presented with the first in a series of complex physical manoeuvres that will continue until they leave and close the door behind them, perhaps an hour or so later. The first task is to remove and arrange one's shoes, taking care not to bump into anyone else who may be there in the confined space. Next, to use the water from a stone basin to wash mouth and hands in a gesture of purification and preparation for what lies ahead. These are simple acts to perform, however the gestures and verbal expressions that follow, on entering the tea-room, become ever more intricate and precise.

Those who arrive open the door to the tea-room and edge forward into the room on their knees. After uttering greetings to all present and making a bow to the teacher, they stand up and walk across to their prescribed position in the tea-room.

The order of these actions is often difficult to remember and the manner in which they should be executed not easy to perform. The tea-room is small and actions within this space need to be controlled and exact. The difficulty is in remembering where, when and how to move and stop the body. Older participants often have difficulty in standing up and sitting down gracefully while maintaining balance and decorum as they move around the room. My own height and size, which is greater than the norm in Japan, made any action, however well performed, seem clumsy and awkward.

The guests sit beside each other and align facing the host, usually the teacher, who prepares the tea. Appreciation of the room, the tea utensils and the measured actions of the host are often tempered by worries about doing the correct thing and executing the right forms; not even the expert performer can be confident of their body always being exact.

These concerns for appearance mean not only covering up mistakes, but also persevering with and hiding physical discomfitures. For the older members whose long years of practice meant easy familiarity with other practitioners, such mistakes and aches were often a source of humour and quickly passed over. But for many of the younger participants who were intent on acting correctly, criticism was a more sensitive issue. One young woman, named 'Keiko-san', who had not been practising for long before I arrived at this training hall, was often visibly embarrassed by her own mistakes. She, in common with many others, would hesitate and look for advice from a more experienced member rather than do something she was not sure of and possibly make a mistake. Most of the time that *Chadō* was performed it was full of gaps and interruptions, not a continuous series of movements.

But where and how in this discontinuous, self-conscious sort of practice may aesthetic value be expressed? Even if we do not know the state of mind where aesthetic value is said to reside, we can appreciate the value of a technical performance. It is mainly through correct action, attending to the minutiae of detail in every gesture, that aesthetic value can be given an expression recognisable to others.

There are also spaces in the procedure when guests are encouraged to show their appreciation of the performance. Using polite and complimentary language, the guests remark upon the taste of the tea, the quality of tea utensils used for its preparation, and sometimes even the skill of the performer, as if these were expressions of an aesthetic consciousness.

Ideally, there should be no need for this kind of commentary during *Chadō*, if the participants have realised the *muhinshu* state of mind (*mu* is 'nothingness', *hin* refers to the 'guest' and *shu* to the 'host'). In this state, the technical demands of role are overcome. The tea master Sōshitsu Sen describes it as follows: 'When host and guest are in harmony at a tea gathering, they merge into a single entity that transcends their respective roles' (Sōshitsu Sen 1979: 40). But this state is only possible if the host and guest commit themselves wholly to the task of appreciating tea, paying attention to the requirements of role, known as *kokore ire*. The first character, *kokoro*, represents 'heart-spirit-mind' and the second means 'to put into' (ibid: 40).

It is hard to recognise if or when in practice this difference between being fully immersed in the role, and the state of being transcendent from its terms and limitations, is resolved. It is clear that by using an aesthetic vocabulary to describe what is going on in the Zen arts, words like *wabi* and *mushin* construct a meaning for the act and ascribe an inner state to the actor. This may inspire and enchant practitioners, encouraging their expectations of some kind of spiritual enlightenment or as one friend said, to attain 'mind-control'. This friend, who was just starting *Chadō* when we met, felt that practice could resolve the problems she had coping with an absent husband and two energetic children.

I met very few practitioners who would admit openly to *satori* being their singular motivation, but none who were not aware of it. At the very least knowing something of the religio-aesthetic background distinguished the practice of *Chadō* from any other kind of pastime.

*Chadō* relies on the collective participation of everyone who is present, host and guests. Guests have a much smaller role to play than the host, who does all the preparation and serves the tea, but they too have tasks to remember and perform. Like the host, they should remember and perform the actions correctly, even if it means freezing a gesture and repeating it again so that it is good enough to continue. Besides remembering when and how to act, it is important for everybody taking part to put up with any discomfiture, so far as is possible. In order for the event to be considered successful its forms should look technically correct so that its aesthetic aspects can then be appreciated. Guests who fidget because their sitting position is uncomfortable detract from the desired appearance. Consequently, stiff knees and backs are ignored or made the subject of humour, and mistakes are repeated until corrected. This endurance of physical discomfort and concern for making the right actions are key experiences of practice.

The conversations that took place after practice often revolved around these themes. Sitting on the train home with other members of the class, we exchanged comments about our physical condition and the successes and failures of practice. We spoke with humour and sympathy of the stiff knees and sore backs that come from sitting still too long, of particular difficulties in the order and execution of correct form. These topics of conversation were repeated among *Shorinji Kempo* practitioners who spoke in great detail about techniques.

There was only one practitioner of *Chadō*, named 'Fumiko-san' who talked to me without prompting about its aesthetic values and her spiritual goals. She admitted that her attitude towards *Chadō* was unusual. Having found and been accepted by a



very senior and well respected teacher, she was committed to an extremely disciplined and demanding kind of training. Her practice sessions with the teacher were always conducted on a one-to-one basis with no opportunities for the usual social gossip that takes place between guests. Fumiko spoke enthusiastically of *wabi*, *muhinshu*, *kokore ire*, and other aesthetic concepts. Doing so supported her claims to practise *Chadō* as *dō*, unlike most people for whom tea practice was a ‘hobby’ (*shumi*).

Should we assume, though, that if most practitioners do not use the aesthetic vocabulary to talk about their experiences then they regard it casually as a form of *reja*, ‘leisure’? I think not. To do so is to confuse the use or absence of a particular vocabulary with an inner state or intention.

As I shall discuss in the next section, and later in Chapter Seven the aesthetic vocabulary of the Zen arts has come to assume wider significance than its original, historical application in medieval Japan. Today, these terms are caught up in political debates and commercial spheres of activity and using them to describe the experience of practice often seems inappropriate. It was only during practice itself, within the tea-room or ‘training hall’ (*dōjō*), and in the presence of seniors or teachers, that aesthetic language did not appear archaic, pompous and even parodic.

The differences I have outlined above distinguish the physical experience of practising *Chadō* from its vocabulary of aesthetic values. There is another important distinction to be explored, that between the sensory experience of practice and the technical criteria for correct performance.

Using an example from *Shorinji Kempo*, I will describe below how the criteria for the correct performance of any act structures experience, and how when practising *Shorinji Kempo* with others of a similar level of expertise, there were opportunities to channel our experience into our technical expression.

The technical curriculum of *Shorinji Kempo* is divided into two systems, 'Hard' applications (*Gōhō*) and 'Soft' applications (*Jūhō*). Hard applications are methods of striking, kicking and blocking. They are a system of movements defined by the use of greater force than that of one's opponent so as to overcome them. 'Soft' applications, on the other hand, are about anticipating and understanding an opponent's weaknesses and using a detailed understanding of the body's manoeuvrability so as to execute a release, lock or throw. Because they do not rely so much on the body's muscular strength to work, 'Soft' techniques are more subtle and difficult to learn. Both systems of techniques are premised on a defensive attitude and presuppose an attack of some kind.

The whole technical system is divided into groups or 'grades' (*kyū/dan*), appropriate for the standard of each member. The logic behind the dividing up of the system into grades is not based on an increasing technical complexity. Many of the techniques at higher grades are actually quite simple. Lower level techniques are chosen for the clarity with which they reveal certain fundamental principles that are relevant later on in the system. The techniques learnt first are therefore the ones to which members keep returning.

I shall concentrate on one lower level technique from the 'Soft system'. The technique is known as *kote nuki*, which means 'wrist release' and is among the first that a new member will learn. There are many other techniques which also involve a 'wrist release', but they each have different names. The naming of techniques relates almost arbitrarily to the mechanics of the movement required for their execution. It is not possible to identify how a technique is performed from the literal meaning of its name. For, practitioners, the names of techniques acquire significance through two channels: 1. The criteria that must be applied for its correct application. These in turn impose certain physical and emotional constraints. 2. Through the accumulated experience of past practice.

The official criteria for the technique of *kote nuki* are as follows:

- (1) 'Assume the right (*chudan-gamae*) stance.'
- (2) 'When the opponent grasps the inside of the right wrist with their right hand; rigidly outstretch the fingers of the right hand.'
- (3) 'When the opponent attempts to pull, step forward on the left leg and execute a *kagite-shuhō* or "defensive posture".'
- (4) 'Strike the opponent's eyes with the left hand.'
- (5) & (6) 'Stepping forward on the right leg draw the seized wrist close to the body. Using the wrist as a fulcrum, press the opponent's hand downward slightly and snap the elbow up toward the opponent so that the elbow nearly lies on his forearm. This movement frees the right wrist from the opponent's grasp.'
- (7) 'Utilising the momentum derived from the eluding movement, deliver a *uraken-uchi* 'back-hand strike with the right arm' (Doshin So 1972: 98-99).

These are the criteria for correct performance. They treat the body as a technical device that needs to be manoeuvred according to fixed, physical principles. Following these criteria disciplines and orders the body's movement. It is not possible to deviate from the step by step logical progression and still execute the technique successfully. Forgetting these principles will draw criticism. When members are examined it is these criteria which they must observe. The 'Technique evaluation criteria for Shorinji Kempo' are very clear: (1) '*Kagite Shuhō* (Defensive posture) must be executed properly', (2) 'The examinee should not jerk his/her hand free', (3) *Atemi*, (strikes) should be executed correctly'.

Each technique places particular demands on the body. These demands are similar to those in other techniques, but never quite the same. In a technique like *kote nuki*, which is a releasing action and not a lock or a throw, there is no need for the defender to apply pain so as to make the technique work; in a lock or throw the joints are manipulated and pressure is applied to a point where the opponent has no choice but to submit.

In *kote nuki*, sensitivity to the degree and direction of the attacker's grab and pull on the wrist joint is very important. Sensitivity involves anticipation and control from the body and is difficult to acquire because one opponent is never the same as another. During the releasing phase, the arm must follow a particular arc of movement, so close attention has to be paid to the relative position of the attacker's body. These demands are the thresholds of sensory experience. Technical criteria impose limitations on the body's expression, and though they may be extended, they cannot be overcome.

It may be useful to think of these technical criteria and the process of learning and internalising them like the process of learning a language. Knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of language are the tools for verbal expression, but without practical experience not a great deal can be communicated effectively. The physical repertoire and technical criteria of the Zen arts describe a vocabulary and grammar for the body which cannot be exceeded but can be tested by the experienced practitioner. Testing and extending the physical boundaries of any technique is one example of how experience may structure expression.

Technical performance can also be affected by another aspect of experience: emotion. I am using the term 'experience' in two ways: firstly, to indicate practical experience which is expressed in the closeness of any performance to the standards set by instrumental criteria. My second usage refers to the emotions of practitioners, such as 'tiredness' (*karada ga darui*), 'stress' (*stress*), but also 'energy' and 'enthusiasm' (*genki*). These can impose themselves on performances independently of a performer's intentions. Feelings and emotions can also be the object of focused intentions by the skilled performer. We should recognise that all performers are experiencing even if they are more or less experienced.

Some of the ways the emotions of everyday experiences are expressed in the performance of techniques are shown in the following examples. Classes usually take

place in the evenings, at the end of a working day and often after a long journey by public transport. Merely to attend a class at all, whatever the quality of the performance during practice, is a significant effort. The effort to remain awake and alert, to try to ignore the physical effects of the day and sustain attention to the end of the class, plainly has implications for the way techniques are performed.

There are also occasions when even stronger feelings than tiredness or lethargy are experienced in the course of practice and the degree to which they may be expressed depends on the thresholds of the technique. A movement like a strike or a kick is a dynamic way of releasing feelings of exuberance, anger or frustration. Similarly, the force of a grip, the reluctance to acquiesce while being held in a locking action, can also be raw expressions of a practitioner's emotional state of mind. Frustration is a common emotion in training, engendered by the body's inability to internalise the principles of a technique as fast as the mind can grasp them.

It is possible from the very beginning of one's training to rationalise any technique as a series of instructions. But these instructions cannot tell the practitioner how to translate these criteria into their own body or describe the sensation of a correct performance. These are questions about 'embodiment' and I shall return to them shortly.

The practitioner who has absorbed the instrumental criteria into the language of their own body is potentially able to express a great deal more than just good technique. I am referring here not to the aesthetic value of a technical performance, but to the possibility of it becoming a means for self-expression. This is what distinguishes the expert performer or teacher, whose movement is both technically correct and aesthetically pleasing and uniquely their own. But this is a rare level of skill to achieve, and for most practitioners the instrumental criteria for performing techniques and the names of the techniques themselves create powerful limitations and direct the individual efforts of practitioners in particular ways.

The control and management of a practitioner's own emotions and intentions are valued as an indication of a disciplined attitude to training. They are also a necessary part of learning new techniques because one is among others who are trying to do the same.

Ideally, this discipline should result in a performance where the feelings, intentions and physical action of the practitioner all correspond perfectly, but this requires a natural, direct relationship between the terms used to name and describe the act, the act itself, and the experiences of the actor performing the act. This is the religio-aesthetic theory which I outlined in the last chapter and is most closely associated with the concept of *mushin* and that of 'pure experience' (*junsui keiken*). Pure experience is a sealing off from the kinds of experiences I have been discussing. It shuts out the emotions and embodied sensations of the ordinary self. I do not doubt the integrity of the claims to pure experience, or believe that such a state of consciousness is unachievable. But my own perception, along with that of the community of participants I practised with, is that the overriding experience of training is of a struggle to control one's feelings and emotions and overcome the body's natural waywardness.

The theory of pure experience supposes a natural and direct connexion between the technical criteria for performance and the expression of aesthetic value. It is the idea of such a connexion that motivates and sustains the involvement of some practitioners and therefore it cannot be denied. But at the same time, there are important experiences which go unstated and unacknowledged, because they are contrary to this theory or else are absorbed by its aesthetic vocabulary.

A good example is *kiai*, the guttural shout which practitioners of *Shorinji Kempo* and other martial arts emit at the climax of any technique.<sup>4</sup> The difference between a good *kiai* and a merely loud shout lies in the way it is performed. Knowing how and

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<sup>4</sup> *Ki* is a term which refers to the state of union between mind and body, and *ai* has the sense here of 'joined together'.



when to *kiai* takes confidence and experience, for when uttered correctly, at the right moment, it expresses aesthetic value. Ideally *kiai* expresses the aesthetic attitude and state of mind of the performer. But, like a technique, the manner in which a *kiai* is performed, its vocal pitch and length for example, may also express individual intentions and emotions.

A *kiai*, like any part of the technical system, does not hold or contain value which is automatically released in performance. It has to be manifested in the here-and-now by an individual body. It is effected by the accumulated experiences of prior performances and subject to change. A theory based on the assumption that aesthetic and spiritual value resides in the properties of the act, object or sound, cannot accommodate or properly account for these kinds of changes. What we are dealing with here is the problem in any referential system of action: the relationship between physicality and referentiality. The relationship between the sensate experience of performance and its referents cannot be limited to the criteria for the correct performance of the act nor to an aesthetic register (which confers an inner state).

Once we admit that the referential possibilities of performance are flexible, then the sense participants have in their practice cannot be clearly defined by them. It is bound up with other factors such as the body.

Regimes of training and the criteria for correct performance standardise the movements of the body and construct an image of its ideal forms. This ideal body is one which can perform all that the technical criteria demand. Through performance, it manifests and therefore continually reaffirms, the aesthetic value and psychological significance of these technical criteria. Performers who choose to interpret their own experience or another's performance within these terms project the body into an enchanted realm. This is a realm where sensory experiences are disregarded when they do not fit within the sense of aesthetic values like *mushin*, *jaku* ('tranquillity'), and *yūgen* ('profundity, remoteness'). My argument is that actually practising and feeling the body having to be constrained so as to act only and always in certain ways,

increases the tangibility of a less enchanted realm of experience and meaning. The body is rarely ideal, learns at an uneven rate, and even after a long experience of practising will often behave in strange and unpredictable ways. As Susan Foster says: 'The Body is never only what we think it is. Illusive, always on the move, the body is at best like something, but it never is that something' (1995: 4).

The sense that the body can be treated as an instrument directly expressive of aesthetic value is emphasised by the exactness and orderliness of all movement in the Zen arts. Movements become familiar to the body through repeated practice and the internalisation of their order. Practising *Shorinji Kempo*, all movements are performed many times in succession. Techniques which require a large combination of movements, as we saw in the case of *kote nuki* ('wrist release'), are usually broken up into smaller parts so that their order and detail are obvious. Each of these component parts can be practised on its own and slowed down so that their relationship to the technique as a whole is understood. In *kote nuki*, stepping forward to make a 'defensive posture' (*kagite shuhō*) is only possible if the initial response was correctly performed. If the practitioner was caught off balance and pulled over at the moment of the partner's grab, they will be unable to perform the rest of the technique. This is why ten or twenty minutes can be spent practising just a single movement from a technique. It is a laborious way to practise and takes so much time that only a few techniques can be performed at any one session. Although some teachers place more emphasis on this method than others, all are aware that the technique can only be performed continuously, as a technique, when every movement is correct and linked together in the right order. When a technique is performed like this, as one continuous motion, its aesthetic merits can be evaluated.

The order of movement in *Chadō* is also important but practised differently. There are very few variations in the overall pattern of movements which need to be remembered for *Chadō*. Unlike *Shorinji Kempo*, where the techniques are always changing, every action in *Chadō* is repeated at each class. The chain of movements in *Chadō* is also much longer and although they are performed at a relatively slow pace,

it is hard to remember their order and maintain continuity. In both *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo*, the importance of remembering the order of the movements which the body must perform is one of the first things a student learns.

But just as important is the order within the movement. This demands attention to the precise manner in which each and every part of the body must move to perform correctly. To pick up a tea bowl, the arm moves out, takes hold of the bowl, lifts it and carries it towards the correct place, making sure it travels at a pace and direction that is neither too high or too low, too fast or too slow.

This description tells the performer what individual parts of their body should do, but not how their whole body should be. Every single part of the body has a place and a role to play in this or any action. The position of the head is not directly involved in carrying out this action, but it may be implicated in its success or failure. Learning the order and details of the movements for *Chadō* is also a process of becoming sensitive to the condition of the whole body. For a beginner in *Chadō*, like myself, it was not possible to be aware of the relative position of every part of the body as it performed and to remember the correct order of movement. The ability to do both is what distinguishes a skilled practitioner.

In *Shorinji Kempo*, the demands on the body are similarly exacting. To execute a strike with the front hand, the weight must transfer from the back foot to the front foot, at the same time the upper body must turn, with the hips and shoulders twisting on the same level plane and finally the arm is released, travelling out from and back to the shoulder in a straight line. But if at any point the shoulders became stiff, no other part of the body's movement can compensate for it and the whole action is flawed. This striking action is extremely basic and repeated many times at every training session, but no-one I have spoken to has ever claimed mastery of it for themselves.

Trying and very occasionally succeeding to get the order in and of movements correct is one of the predominant sensory experiences of practising *Chadō* and *Shorinji*

*Kempo*. It is a process without end, for as a practitioner's ability to perform improves so too does their awareness of the subtleties in a body's movement. There are layers of detail which reveal the relationship of one movement to another and of every movement to the whole body. One experienced *Chadō* performer described this process to me as being like a lens trying to focus on an object that is always getting closer but is never still or close enough to fix clearly. The experiences which this analogy tries to make sense of, are the result of many years of conscientious searching for technical perfection. The ideal analogy for practical experience in the Zen arts should be a mirror. When the body performs with ordered technical perfection it reflects aesthetic value and achieves a state of *mushin*.

This is a state of total mind-body awareness expressed, as we saw in chapter two, by a mediating term: *ki* ('energy'). The problem then, as here, is how such a state can be achieved through repeatedly shaping the body's movement into certain forms. The experiences which arise from the effort to do this well are also a heightened state of body consciousness sometimes expressed in terms of *ki* (e.g. *genki*: 'energy'), but not referring to a state of *mushin* or *satori*. The distinction I want to make here is between a religio-aesthetic vocabulary sometimes used for talking about the forms and experiences of practice, and another language, primarily the non-verbal language of the body itself, used for doing the Zen arts.

Focusing on the order in and of movements means that it is often difficult to perform a whole action continuously without becoming trapped in its technical details. In order for technical criteria to be transcended, action must express a state of *mushin*. But it is precisely the search for technical perfection through repetition and a constant attention to detail that confirms the idea that making the body move in a certain way is the means to achieving an enchanted inner state. In this 'enlightened' state, the image of the body is based on the exactness and repetitiveness of its movement, not on its other qualities.

This other language becomes more evident when we inquire how a skilfully expressive body is acquired in practice. The student learns by observing the demonstrations of teachers and trying repeatedly to copy the shape of their movement. As there is often little verbal instruction, it is also necessary to try and commit to the body's sensory memory the movement and positions of the limbs. This is learning kinaesthetically 'through the body' (*karada de oboeru*), and it is characterised by the experience of always attempting to make exact movements but never quite succeeding.

Often, the remembered sensation of a movement and its prescribed shape do not coincide. It may feel to the practitioner that the body is moving correctly but still look wrong. If the body could be relied upon to remain in the same sensory condition, then the learning process would be much more accurate and direct. As it is, the student is usually forced to refer to the visual characteristics of a movement rather than the way it feels, if they are to avoid criticism.

Reproducing the visual, rather than the sensory features of movement, means that a performance can more certainly be considered to express aesthetic value because it looks right. A performance that only 'feels' right, in terms of the performer's own bodily sensations, risks getting the form wrong. Between visual and kinaesthetic ways of learning and doing, there is a tension that is partly the result of most movements being too complex for a teacher to communicate by example or a student to remember by performing. In recent years, there has been a shift from kinaesthetic to visual learning, which, we shall see later, has been facilitated by an expansion in the number and type of illustrated text books.

Even a highly motivated body, one that is expert at visual imitation, often gets it wrong and makes mistakes. The differences between kinaesthetic and visual modes of learning demonstrate that the body is not wholly controllable, but by its nature liable to do the unexpected.

In *Chadō*, for example, there is an action which involves pouring water into a small bowl. This is performed from a height, using a long wooden ladle and not to spill, splash or knock against anything demands a high level of physical control. There must be neither too much nor too little movement in the hand as it tilts the ladle, nor over-compensation for any error. These are delicate actions which can easily be misjudged. Repeated practice and concentration is not enough to prevent the body from occasionally drifting out of control.

Mrs Ise, who taught *Chadō* at the Bentshō training hall would occasionally not perform for this reason. She had difficulty with those parts of the procedure which required her, as host, to enter the room balancing tea utensils in her hands, and walk to her position and kneel down. A recurring ear infection had upset her sense of balance and on the one occasion when she did perform for her students, she almost fell over. This may be an extreme example of a loss of control, but it does allow us to reflect on how the body's condition is liable to change in more subtle ways, on a weekly or daily basis, and effect the quality of performance.

In fact, these kinds of bodily transgressions are just as regular an experience of training when the body is quite well. In *Shorinji Kempo*, the line between physical confidence and a loss of body control is narrow and easily crossed. In these situations, for example, a strike or a lock may not observe the threshold of its technical criteria and so an injury might occur. The body is always liable to break the intended path for its movement, even with the strongest motivations it may do the unexpected.

But doing the unexpected can mean not only getting things wrong but also getting them right. The body may exceed its normal capacity to perform and confound the expectations of a performer. Typically, after a long period of attempting unsuccessfully to perform a particular movement, the body suddenly finds a correct way to do it. This is not accidental, but tends to happen despite, rather than because of, a performer's motivations. For myself and the other beginners, learning *Chadō* at



Benten-chō, it was common to be frustrated by the body's inability to reproduce immediately the movements which our teacher had demonstrated. We could talk about and recognise correct form in others but rarely perform it ourselves. Only by persistently trying and experimenting with one's own body was it possible to increase the chances of success. There was no formula whereby after a certain number of repetitions in a specified period of time the body would automatically be able to perform correctly. The process of learning and improving relied heavily on each body's capacity to be more or less innovative.

The differences between the body getting a movement right and getting it wrong are often small and not always clear to the performer. The arbiter of good and bad form, and therefore of the student's progress, is the teacher. If there are mistakes, they point out what is wrong by demonstrating the correct form in front of the student. Very little is said at these moments. The *Chadō* teacher, Mrs Ise, often said nothing at all. She would reach out and touch the wayward part of one's body and herself gently guide it in the right direction. It was very rare for an explanation to be offered about exactly why or where the form of movement had been deficient. This is intentional, for without direct or verbal advance the student must rely on the capacity of their body to intuitively understand and perform. The aim is that by constantly 'testing the body' (*taiken*) the performer will perform naturally, 'without thinking' a state of *mushin*. But the more common experiences are confusion over what exactly is required, frustration at the body's slowness to learn, and a reliance on imitating the teacher's movements rather than linking them to the body's sensations.

The tendency of the body to be transgressive and its capacity to be creative are acknowledged within the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts, but only as part of idealised models of progression. Each model of development in the Zen arts sets the standard for its practitioners. They all differ in the number of stages and criteria for advancement but share an assumption best articulated in the 'Nine stages of learning' that *Nō* theatre laid down by Zeami (1363-1443). Concerning this Theodore de Bary

has commented that, 'the origin of all these stages of the art may be found in the art of versatility and exactness. It is the foundation of the art of the Nō' (1995: 61-62).

These themes of 'versatility' or creative adaptation, and 'exactness' or the attention to order in/of movement, set the terms and define the limits of what and how it is possible for the body to express. Initially, the student only imitates as closely as possible what the teacher shows them. They must begin by internalising the basic movements, literally 'attaching them to the body' (*waza o tsukeru*). In the middle stage(s) they begin to adapt, within the limits set by technical criteria, the movement to their own bodies. This is a difficult stage beyond which most practitioners do not progress, constantly checking and rechecking form, adapting and restraining their bodies so that it 'fits' the shape of the movement. There is a final stage(s) where it is possible to transform utterly the movements which express aesthetic value. In such instances, the practitioner creates new criteria for performance and even, as in the case of figures like Zeami and Sen Rikyū, constructs new aesthetic values for appreciation.

In *Chadō* this stage is called *Jaku*, which is a Buddhist concept that 'elicits a sense of lasting inner tranquillity, which transcends individual desire and arbitrarily imposed cognitive categories' (Anderson 1991: 216). *Jaku* is significantly different from the other three principles of the *Chadō*: *wa*, *kei* and *sei*. These all substantiate the normative procedures of *Chadō*. *Jaku*, on the other hand, is pure creation.

*Shorinji Kempo* also recognises in its final stage of development a state of being that transcends what is normally possible (*ri*). Again, *ri* is a Buddhist concept and signifies a rare and remarkable ability to express the same aesthetic values in a new physical form, one that is the performer's own.

Within the terms of these models of development, creativity is a quality with aesthetic and spiritual value possessed only by certain gifted individuals. These models do not recognise that the body has a capacity to be creative in other ways - what I have been

calling the capacity for innovation. There are ways as I shall show, that the body is experienced as being creative and transgressive which are beyond a model's capacity to explain. As experiences, bodily transgressions are not defined by the thresholds of a technique or movement, neither is bodily creativity explained as an act of genius.

Bodily innovation is distinct from the unique corporeal identity which the body may ideally achieve by being able to reproduce expertly certain forms of movement. For even when treated as a vehicle for aesthetic expression, the body continually creates new images of itself, not only because it is an imperfect mechanism for representation, but also because it is engaged in a changing relationship to others and to its environment. Exploring and expanding upon this question will lead to a re-examination of the body's relation to an aesthetic register and to ideas about Japanese Culture.

Traditional studies of the Zen arts, like those of Dance<sup>5</sup> only admit to agency when it is a part of individual genius. There is a large and influential body of stories in the Zen arts about the remarkable ability of certain practitioners to perform in ways beyond what is normally possible. These are individuals who stand out because of their unique ability to expand the existing criteria for movement and create something new.

They are figures like Sen Rikyū, who refashioned the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) as an exercise in Zen aesthetics, and Doshin So, the charismatic figure who founded *Shorinji Kempo* in the post-war years. Most explanations of their achievements in inventing or reinventing their respective disciplines concentrate on their strength of character and how key events in their lives led them to such a remarkable creativity (Anderson 1991; Plutschow 1986; Sadler 1962).

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<sup>5</sup> The commentators whose studies of Dance typify this approach are: Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Maurice Leenhardt, Marcel Mauss and Marcel Griaude, all of whom 'gave sustained consideration to the cultural specificity of beliefs and attitudes toward the body' (Foster 1995: 14).

Barbara Babcock has described this kind of approach as the 'psycho-socio biographical perspective', one of two basic approaches to innovation in the arts (1993: 75). The other approach is 'Art-historical', and whilst it admits to the creativity of any performer, explains it only in relation to the tradition of which they are part. In both these approaches to innovation there is no recognition of the ways regular practitioners of the Zen arts are always being adaptive and inventive. Once we accept that in practice the Zen arts do not simply reflect or communicate an aesthetic value, but are in a constant process of re-construction and re-presentation, then what we are concerned with is the relationship of creativity to traditions.

Once again, it is Victor Turner's work that is the starting point for exploring this dialectic between creativity and tradition. In Turner's view, if you want to understand creativity you have to look at ritual processes for it is here that cultural transformations, like 'enlightenment' in the Zen arts, are produced. If we develop this approach, as a recent collection of authors has done, then a more 'emergent' view of creativity is possible, 'at once a property of individuals and of social situations' (Lavie, Narayan & Rosaldo 1993: 5). This is how we should view creativity in the Zen arts, as belonging both to the aesthetic tradition and to the self-conscious body of each individual.

Given that each individual's style of performance is both shared and unique, it therefore demands protracted experience to recognise, distinguish and appreciate these qualities in one's self and in other's performances. This is not yet the level of understanding that I have reached in my practice of *Chadō*. Practising *Chadō* I am broadly aware of the body's condition and mistakes when they occur, but not of the subtler sensations and nuances in movement. The kind of idiosyncrasies in movement I am referring to are slight, not, for example, the broad differences distinguishable between the two styles of *Chadō*: *Urasenke* and *Omotesenke*. These are two separate repertoires of movements.

What I am trying to describe are the subtle hesitations, omissions and exaggerations in a body's movement that resonate with a history of corporeal encounters. These variations are mostly too fine to exceed the boundaries of technical criteria, but they give expression to the practical and personal history of each member.

In *Shorinji Kempo*, for example, there is a way of performing the technique *kote nuki* particular to one teacher, Mori sensei. The differences from other variations are slight, but immediately identifiable. When the inside wrist is grabbed by an opponent, the hand is not 'rigidly outstretched' as the technique's criteria demand. It is extended enough for the thumb and little finger to be stiff, but relaxed enough for the hand to be slightly cupped and the middle three fingers loose. He calls the condition of his hand when it is in this position 'soft touch', and it is this relaxed, receptive, and yielding quality which links all of his movements. Mori's style of movement has taken many years to evolve (about forty years by his own account), and is still changing. The small differences in this style from the *Shorinji Kempo* repertoire express Mori's own experiences of, and motivations for, practising.

It is not easy for others with less seniority and experience to perform in such a personal and distinctive style, especially before those who may have different interpretations. To choose to do so reflects a physical confidence and maturity, not only in the adopted style, but also in one's own ability to perform. In the same way, to change and select a style of performance suitable to each partner and occasion is also a physical expression of a practitioner's wide experience and creative capability. Many practitioners may have a knowledge of particular styles of performance, but none will ever have quite the same history of selecting, adapting and changing movements to one unique body. Each practitioner's body is a creative body, constrained but not defined by tradition. Accepting this, it is possible to talk of a history of practice being 'written' both on and by the body (Foster 1995: 15). The history that is 'written' on the body is that of an aesthetic tradition, a register of abstract verbal concepts invested with the power to enchant. A body that 'writes' is one that is experiencing in the here and now, self-aware and creative.

What we need is a concept that will mediate between these two views of the body. One such concept is 'embodiment', a term that aims to straddle what has been described as 'the distinction between representation and being in the world' which is also 'the difference between understanding culture in terms of objectified abstraction and existential immediacy' (Csordas 1994: 10).<sup>6</sup> 'Embodiment' comes very close to the mind/body condition referred to by terms like *ki* and *kokoro* in the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts. The difference is that in terms of this theory *ki* and *kokoro* express a rare and profound connexion between the Self and the World, and between an individual's mental and physical character (Kasulis 1993). My argument about embodiment is that it helps to identify those other, mundane, and far more common sensory experiences of participation.

The sense of being, or sense of self, to which a vocabulary of terms like those we find in the Zen arts may refer is the subject of a growing body of academic literature, notably, in the Japanese case, editor Nancy Rosenberger's volume *'The Japanese sense of Self'* (1993). The problem here with using the term 'Self' as the referent of a particular aesthetic vocabulary, is how we describe those states of being which exist in the absence of these words, or indeed of any words at all. As Andrew Strathern remarks about Rosenberger's book 'the concepts discussed depart so markedly from ideas of an internal, unique individual that they would be better signalled by another roster of terms' (1996: 202). This criticism is pertinent to a discussion of the Zen arts where practitioners deliberately enter a zone of performance that is intensely sensory and beyond the scope of normal language. We need to find a new and different language from the aesthetic vocabulary, one that also stresses action and the state of mind that resides in doing, but is not directed solely at enlightenment.

The problem with the aesthetic vocabulary of the Zen arts is that they only tell us about certain kinds of experiences, those which substantiate the religio-aesthetic

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<sup>6</sup> 'Embodiment' is the development of an argument pursued by Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1987: 7) that 'the Body is simultaneously a physical and symbolic artefact'.



theory. When these terms are used to account for other experiences or practices as they are today in sporting activities like baseball and advertising campaigns they risk losing their capacity to enchant participation in the Zen arts.<sup>7</sup>

When practitioners talk to each other during practice it is almost always about body movement. Comments are usually as brief or as technical as 'too high', 'further to the left' or simply 'do it like this'. They only make sense as part of an individual's embodied conversation. Words like *mushin*, *heijōshin* ('calm mind') or *wabi* are simply never used in training except to talk specifically about the theory and philosophy of the Zen arts. This aesthetic vocabulary refers both to a property of movement and to a state of mind, but not, it seems, to the regular bodily experiences of practitioners.

There are very few practitioners who through the manner of their performance clearly and consistently embody both aesthetic value and their own experience. It usually requires a great deal of practical experience. One individual for whom this was the case had been a practitioner and teacher of *Shorinji Kempo* for over forty years when I met him. Mori Sensei has a unique style of performing *Shorinji Kempo* and I will make his style the nub of an argument about the way in which an individual's sense of being may be expressed through their body, in what they do. Developing the concept of embodiment, I will describe the bodily locus of agency in Mori's performance and aim to avoid any analysis that may end up reducing him into a psychological category. The following comments are based on two years of practising as a student in Mori's class.

Mori sensei's style is his own creation and, based on a particular attitude to practice which developed along with a remarkable level of bodily awareness. This was firstly an awareness of his body, which was not as large or as strong as most others with whom he practised. Partly out of the need to deal with bigger and stronger people,

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<sup>7</sup> Brian Moeran has identified and discussed the use of this *seishin* ('spirit') vocabulary in a variety of modern activities (Moeran 1989).

but also from an extreme curiosity about how the body reacted in physical contact with others, this awareness of the body became an awareness with the body. An awareness with the body is what Stuart McFarlane has usefully described elsewhere, in the context of another martial system, as a 'sensitivity to feel' (1989: 242). It means that when for example Mori is performing *kote nuki* and his wrist is grabbed he can feel immediately and precisely the strength and direction of that attack. He reacts, aware of his own body's capabilities and weaknesses and of the attacker's as well. With this 'sensitivity to feel' the attacker's body is easily manipulated by Mori's own. This awareness with the body which grew from Mori's personal interest, physical condition and long experience was still, he admitted to me, in a process of change and development. Aware of his own body growing older and its physical capabilities changing, Mori kept adjusting the way he used it in practice. Noting this, we should not confuse bodily awareness as a function of age. There was a great deal more of Mori communicated through the manner of his performance than advancing years.

Practitioners who watch Mori sensei perform quickly detect that there is something very unusual going on. The outline and criteria of each technique is familiar but there is no visible effort or excessive movement in his body action. It looks almost too easy.

To appreciate the subtlety of his gestures it was not enough to observe, one had to feel them. Mori understood this and deliberately took much time and care demonstrating in turn with each member of his class. Most students reacted with a mixture of puzzlement, surprise and awe at the ease with which their bodies were being manipulated this way and that.

Mori sensei took obvious delight in this kind of practice and always smiling, often joking, could take up most of a class just demonstrating with others. His was an exceptional method of teaching, for most clubs required a student to learn visually from a demonstration, and then try to remember and copy what they had seen. Mori's approach, based on his heightened bodily awareness, involved direct and sustained

contact. A partner could feel his relaxed, engaging, and at times almost intimate, manner in the way his body moved and theirs responded. He called it 'Soft touch', using the English words humorously and for my benefit. His students paid close attention to his body action as their bodies were induced to move about. They tried diligently to imitate with others what they had felt in their practice with him. Mori enjoyed their efforts and their exasperation before once again, effortlessly demonstrating what they were trying to do.

Along with the other students, I made copious notes on the intricacies and details of his method. On the train home each evening after class, we sat together and discussed what we had learnt or not understood. Little by little a theory emerged that could explain Mori's 'sensitivity to feel', as a series of diagrams and rational principles. But even equipped with this knowledge the same level of performance eluded us all.

A growing conjecture was confirmed when on one occasion Mori was conversing with a few of us during a rest period. He explained why it was that he was always smiling and playful when he performed. He would not, he said, be able to perform the way that he did without being this way. This attitude was a physical sensation, it reflected how his body felt: open, receptive and 'light', able to make significant contact with others.

Mori's style of performance could not be duplicated through an assimilation of technical criteria, principles and diagrams, because it was essentially an extension and an expression of his personal presence. Through his creative embodiment of technical acts, a sense of being Mori was expressed. The difference between Mori's and others' embodied expressions of being was the distinctiveness of his expression. It was uniquely his own.

The notion of 'personal presence' is a particularly useful one in a discussion of what Kirsten Hastrup calls, with reference to the problem of agency in culture, the 'field of embodied motivation' which focuses on 'not only the expression or action itself but

also its motivation' (1995: 77). Mori's motivations were expressed in and through his body as a distinctive felt presence. It was felt by others as relaxed, light, sometimes playful, but totally absorbing. This state of being is separate from any of the inner states said to be released when an action is correctly performed. For a practitioner to present their performance using the language of inner states would be to make a claim to represent the aesthetic tradition. Mori's authority among his students stemmed partly from a claim to express a generic voice, an aesthetic tradition, but also came from being himself.

We were all aware of his rank within the *Shorinji Kempo* organisation and his close relationship to its founder, Doshin So. But his students were very clear in talking to each other and to me that it was the personal qualities of Mori himself, expressed through his own remarkable method of performing, which drew them to him.

To a lesser degree than Mori, every practitioner of the Zen arts is also capable of communicating aspects of themselves through the manner of their performance. What distinguished Mori and his students was their method of practising *Shorinji Kempo* which actually facilitated an individual's embodied awareness and made them more receptive to others. These are also goals to training in other centres for *Shorinji Kempo*, but attempted by different methods which do not sacrifice the importance of exactly reproducing certain forms. There is a much greater emphasis than with Mori on a 'hard' and 'serious' (*majimena*) attitude to practice, typically expressed by the exhortations *gambaru* and *isshōkenmei*, 'Give your best effort'. Within these physically demanding regimes, the attention paid to correct form is such that it tends to obscure the personal presence of the practitioner.

It is through participation and a 'sensitivity to feel' in contact with others that it is possible to make out the differences between the personal and the generic voice. In these embodied encounters, it is clear that even if their personal presence is less distinct than that of someone like Mori sensei, no participant's motivation or

experience should be confused through the fact of their participation with a singular intent to express aesthetic value.

Personal presence is not only expressed in and through movement but also present in the absence of action. For experienced practitioners and observers of the Zen arts these movements of 'no-action' reflect the influence of Zen Buddhism and the 'inner-strength' of the actor (de Bary 1995: 57). In the gaps, where there are no actions for the body to attach itself to except posture the space is filled with the traces of what has been performed and the anticipation of what will follow. It is then that the motivation of a practitioner can be apprehended most directly, through their physical presence.

This is often why those without experience who are not confident to reveal their motivations tend to rush from one action to the next; they prefer that the technical and aesthetic value of the movement 'speaks' for them. Those who, like Mori, do understand and fill these gaps with their presence are among the most expressive performers.

Perhaps nowhere is the importance of 'no-action' more evident than in *Chadō* where movement is filled with deliberate pauses and there are few moments of direct contact between the host and guests. When physical contact is made, through a carefully prepared cup of green tea, the host sits unmoving as the guests drink. This is the most intimate and expressive moment of the whole ceremony, but the host is still throughout.

Unlike *Shorinji Kempo*, there is not the sustained physical contact between performers which allows for the expression of personal motivations to be so directly felt. In *Chadō*, the host must remain aware not only of their own body as it moves but also when it is still. Only then will the guests feel a relationship being created with them as participants not observers. It is in the spaces of the host's action, when

their body stops moving, that the presence of the host is most keenly felt, since there is nothing else to which the guests can attach motivation.

In every action there are limits to the embodied expression of personal motivations. These limits are not defined wholly by the self of the performer nor by the technical and aesthetic criteria of the act; every time an individual performs they re-present aesthetic value and their own experience.

We have seen that we cannot look to the body to define the boundaries of the sense that practitioners make of their participation in the Zen arts because it is too manipulable and imprecise. What mechanism, then, does establish limits both of aesthetic expression and of embodied experience? To discover this we should look, I propose, at the theory of Mimesis.



## **Chapter 4**

### **The Zen Arts as a form of *Mimesis***

When we look at the experiences and perceptions of those who practise the Zen arts today, two broad approaches emerge. They can be treated as exercises in skill and as expressions of aesthetic value. Neither of these approaches is necessarily predominant, nor does one exclude the other.

For any practitioner to develop and refine skill, or to realise an aesthetic inner state demands sustained and committed physical involvement. The sensory experiences and embodied intentions of those who are so practically engaged are particular and diverse; but this does not prevent action from also being collectively interpreted as an image of aesthetic value. Ideally, this aesthetic inner world is the result of a performer physically identifying both with the technical aspects of movement and with its aesthetic qualities. The aim is to integrate the technical image, the aesthetic quality, and the embodied experience; in doing this, the performer is said to attain a heightened state of consciousness. This state has been described variously as ‘oneness of the body and mind’ (*shin shin ichinyo*) by Eisai (1141-1215) and as ‘casting off the body and mind’ (*shin jin datsuraku*) by Dōgen (1200-1232). It is also a return to the original, universal nature of all being or *ki* (psycho-physical ‘energy’), which has no form and cannot in principle be represented by the body. There is a complex philosophical debate about what this state is and how it should be interpreted (Yuasa 1993; Kasulis, Ames & Dissanayake 1993; Bloom and Fogel 1997). One key point of agreement is that practice should not be driven by a desire to become technically proficient, neither to be an expert tea-maker or fighter. The irony is, as we shall see, that changes in the structure, organisation and ethos of training now make technique an end in itself and the means to progress within the system.

What the proper goal to practice of the Zen arts should be is well expressed by the relationship of two terms common in Buddhism: *ri* ('inspiration') and *ji* ('principle'). Trevor Legget describes *ri* as the 'inner lines of the universal flow' (*ki*) and *ji* as the formalised techniques or 'grammar' which imitates and manifests *ri*: 'ri and ji may be explained as "formless" and "with form". A *ji* is a definite technique with a form, and can be seen and taught, but what is formless cannot be seen and taught' (1978: 122,125). In the doctrine of the Zen arts, integrating the form of the body with the consciousness of the mind is also an integration of *ri* and *ji*.

The act of properly performing *Chadō* or *Shorinji Kempo* should not be an exercise in technical accomplishment, attending only to the form of the act. It should be an expression of what has been called a 'somatic attitude' (Yuasa 1993) to action, i.e. a style of movement which reflects an aesthetic quality. This is the notion of *kata* or *katachi* ('fixed movements or postures'), which I have mentioned before and are explained as follows: 'Zen corrects the mode of one's mind by putting one's body into the correct postures (*katachi*). Training, it seems, is a discipline for shaping one's body into a form. Art is embodied through cumulative training; one comes to learn an art through one's body ... Training or disciplining means to make the mind's movements accord with the body's. In this respect, theatrical performance, athletic activity, and vocational skills are all similar' (Yuasa quoted in Kasulis, Ames & Dissanayake 1993: 316,317).

In *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo*, as in all the Zen arts, movements are fixed so that their form can be an expression of aesthetic value and so that they can be copied exactly by every practitioner. Imitation is the key element in developing this somatic attitude to action or '*kata*-mind'. In *kata*, the repeated imitation of standardised patterns of movement are a physical and visual substantiation of a tradition, connecting the practitioner to aesthetic qualities, as well as to all the others, past and present, who also practice. The question I want to ask here is what lies behind the idea of a 'somatic attitude' and how can it be reconciled with the particular embodied experiences and perceptions of practitioners that I described

earlier. The theory is that as the mind/body complex develops through practice, actions that are initially imposed and learned become second nature. At this point, the forms which the body imitates reveal the 'true' or universal nature of the performer. I propose that what is being referred to in developing a body capable of expressing and experiencing aesthetic quality through the imitation of fixed forms is a highly developed sense of the mimetic faculty, or as Michael Taussig puts it: 'the nature that Culture uses to create Second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other' (Taussig 1993: xiii).

Mimesis is generally regarded as a literary theory, a theory of interpretation. Only recently has this theory been extended to the realm of anthropology (Taussig 1993; Gebauer & Wulff 1995; Adams 1996). Indeed, the concept of mimesis has undergone so many changes in the history of its usage, from Plato and Aristotle to Auerbach and Adorno, that one cannot properly talk of it as a coherent 'theory'.

The first attempt at a theory of mimesis is that composed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, where he describes Tragedy as an 'imitation of an action'. His idea, gleaned from Plato, was that poetry of any kind, tragic or otherwise, must represent action and nature as they are in their essence. Ultimately, all art, not only poetry, was mimetic in character, expressing the fundamental nature of things in an aesthetic mode.

This theory is close to the orthodoxy of the Zen arts; a system of action which represents the essential nature of being: *ki* ('psycho-physical energy') and *kokoro* ('Heart'/'Mind') in an aesthetic mode. Or, to put it differently, that the Zen arts are an imitation of nature in a poetic way. Such a notion of the Zen arts is supported by 'literalness', the idea that the quality of art lies in the exact imitation of observation and detail. However, attention to detail and the literal reproduction of technical criteria should not be mistaken for the purpose of imitative action, which is, according to the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts, not to refer to the act itself but to disclose another, enchanted world.

Thus far we have only accounted for the imitative aspect of mimesis, but the Aristotelian view of mimesis is not only about the imitation of reality. Like Plato, Aristotle regarded mimesis as the organising principle in art, and aesthetics as an imitation of the natural world. Aristotle's crucial departure from Plato was to conceive of mimesis not as a direct imitation of reality but a creation, as Paul Ricoeur states, '*mimesis* is not a copy: *mimesis* is *poiesis*, that is a construction, creation'. Ricoeur goes on to outline Aristotle's two indications of this creative dimension, both of which reflect the orthodoxy of the Zen arts. Firstly, that creativity in imitation attests to the 'genius' of the performer, and secondly that it enhances and enchants the act as more than an expression of technical expertise (1981: 180).

But if the Zen arts are creative imitations how do they come to be perceived as fixed and immutable 'forms', *kata*? It is their 'literalness' which makes them appear so immutable, each copy reproducing the visual qualities of an original. The form of a practitioner's movement is perceived through a 'somatic attitude' as if it were an immutable imitation of the fundamental nature of being: *ki* and *kokoro*. It is the qualities of literalness and a 'somatic attitude' which reveal the Zen arts as aesthetic.

The point here is that as mimetic acts, the Zen arts do not simply 'represent' or 'express' aesthetic value. For if the Zen arts were only to 'represent' the universal nature of being and not to mirror its fundamental nature, then they could be considered distracting, if not fraudulent. This is the criticism which Zen philosophers have, in the past, levelled at any form of representation that directs attention away from 'pure experience'. On the other hand, as we saw earlier, the issue for practitioners is that imitative action does not directly 'express' their embodied experiences of performance.

What we seem to have in the religio-aesthetic and mimetic theory of the Zen arts is an extension of the 'art for art's sake' movement of the nineteenth century. Here, the fixed and standardised forms (*kata*) which the Zen arts represent are held to be

more real than the real, because they are transformative, having the potential to break through to an enchanted state of being.

But there is a problem with applying the Aristotelian theory of mimesis to the Zen arts. When we talk in theoretical terms of a correspondence, through imitation, between an act and its representative value, we do not know what kind of correspondence it is. Is it a sensory or a nonsensory correspondence? There is no space in Aristotle's theory of mimesis for acknowledging or exploring this area of embodied experience. Treated as a theory, mimesis is always ambivalent because it must encompass too many variations in its usage. I want to avoid exploiting this ambivalence as some post modernists, like Jacques Derrida have done, because it often leads to confusion. Mimesis is not a theory. It is a faculty, like the body, part of the human condition. The mimetic faculty is simultaneously the representation of aesthetic qualities and a re-presentation, a creation that is embodied experience.

A recent work by two historical anthropologists (Gebauer & Wulff 1995) comprehensively surveys ideas about mimesis and their application to anthropological understanding. They identify four aspects to the mimetic faculty, all of which are present in the Zen arts:

- (1) In many usages, mimesis has an important relational dimension. People may use their mimetic abilities as a means of 'identification', producing a correspondence with others (ibid: 5). In *Shorinji Kempo* and the other *Budō*, this state is described as 'union between the two *ki* (energies): *ki-hō* and *kiai*. This is an 'affective movement', when the embodied energies of both partners are manifested as acts and correspond positively. Performers are able to see and feel themselves through the embodied responses of the other, and in spite of the confrontational nature of their encounter perceive no inequality. In *Chadō* this state is known as *wa* ('harmony'), and occurs when the physical presence of the host is expressed through the act, thereby engendering a relationship of complementarity with the guests. Gebauer and Wulff describe

complementarity as 'manifest in physical form when a person clings to the other; it is a sensuous bodily act, but it is already penetrated by order, the other (guest/partner) is assimilated to the world of the person who is clinging' (ibid: 5).

Mimetic acts then are, 'acts of complementarity', acts which produce an harmonious correspondence between people. The most explicit acts of complementarity in the Zen arts occur at the beginning and end of a performance. Before any technical practice can take place in *Shorinji Kempo*, both performers must make a gesture or 'salute'. They place their hands together and simultaneously raise and lower them to face level. It is a gesture which reminds them that whatever their differences in rank, status, age or gender, the mimetic aspects of the act they will perform binds them together within the same technical framework for a mutual purpose of learning from each other.

(2) Mimesis also 'includes both an active and a cognitive component'. Gebauer and Wulff describe this aspect of mimesis as 'practical knowledge', from Pierre Bourdieu's concept '*sens pratique*'. But acknowledging that the involvement of the body in mimesis distinguishes it from a purely cognitive way of knowing also brings its meaning close to the sense of 'embodiment'. This is confirmed by the final two qualities of mimesis (ibid: 5).

(3/4) Mimesis originates as a 'physical action' and like the Zen arts is 'gestural', always pointing towards something, presenting an image or form of that which is indicated. This is also the 'performative' character of mimesis, which generates what Taussig has described as 'a sensuous sense of the real, mimetically at one with what it attempts to represent' (1993: 16).

Mimesis is a faculty where a range of conditions coincide. It is reminiscent of the concept of embodiment, mediating between two different ways of seeing the world. One is based on cognition and representation, the other on practice and experience.



Like embodiment, mimesis helps us to understand how a performance of any of the Zen arts is an act which produces an aesthetic world and is creative.

Mimesis does not separate aesthetic experience from aesthetic expression. It constitutes a relation between them by recognising the constructed character of aesthetic qualities. If we view the Zen arts as systems of mimetic action, then we can see participants as intending, by their 'somatic attitude', to produce an aesthetic world in such a way that it will be perceived by both them and others as a specific world. It is through the concept of mimesis that questions about the relation of a constructed world of aesthetic expression to practical experience can be best pursued. Explained as mimetic acts, the Zen arts on the one hand generate a pressure to conform, disciplining, structuring and restraining the body, while on the other they allow it individual expression. The Zen arts make available fixed, standardised forms of how to act and at the same time supply interpretations of what one can be and become in action. These 'forms', *kata*, have the power to enchant, not through the imitation of their literal qualities, but through the inner world that these qualities point towards. Individual movements in the *kata* of *Shorinji Kempo* do not have specific symbolic meanings. The pattern of steps, strikes and blocks have a combative application, but that is secondary to the embodied condition which performing such movements is supposed to induce. In *Chadō*, particular actions do have symbolic value. The directions of the host's movements, for example, as they prepare tea are oriented to a Taoist cosmological scheme (Anderson 1991: 160-163).<sup>1</sup> But most practitioners I have spoken with were not aware of these detailed significances. They talked instead about the movements as movements, rather than as representations of particular cosmologies. It is the detail and sophistication of movement, what I have called its 'literal qualities', that have the most influence on the experience of performers. They are designed to be a deliberate obstacle, to develop physical concentration and sensory awareness. Performing *kata* with concentration and awareness enables a person to experience and to express an

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<sup>1</sup> The sources of symbolic value for the movements of *Chadō* are diverse. One recently proposed although as yet unpublished theory is that the action of lifting the bowl of prepared green tea to head height prior to drinking it has been directly influenced by the gesture which a Catholic priest makes when consecrating wine during the rite of Mass.

aesthetic realm. Through mimesis, the 'inner world' that may be expressed is not only an aesthetic realm, it is also the practical history and experience of each individual's involvement in the Zen arts: 'Mimesis makes it possible for individuals to step out of themselves, to draw the outer world into their inner world and to lend expression to their interiority - through that outer world of form' (Gebauer & Wulff 1995: 2).

What does it mean in the Zen arts to 'draw the outer world' into the 'inner world'. In one sense, it is about moulding the body into certain forms of movement a process of 'embodiment'. I have already described some of the sensory experiences which result from this process, in particular the sense of the body being an expressive mechanism, although not a precise one for copying forms. There is, however another aspect to the experience of embodiment: a heightened awareness of certain qualities perceived by the senses. This is the sensuous dimension to the Zen arts, a world full of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch that can only be appreciated through participation.

The description which follows is based on two sources. Firstly, it pieces together comments by a number of different participants, either directed towards each other during practice or else at me, in response to questions that I asked. The way I came to listen for these comments and pose certain questions was the result of my own participation and the feeling that what I sensed was not peculiar to myself.

Among the first things one notices on entering a tea house is the lack of light and space. There is only enough space for the host, three or four guests and the tea utensils; and with only three small latticed windows high up near the roof to let in light, much of the room is in shadow. The structure is almost entirely constructed of roughly cut and unfinished wood, and the smell of the room can reflect the seasons, dry and faintly acrid in summer, damp and musty in autumn and winter. There are a few objects like the tea caddies and brightly decorated *karamono*, ('chinese-ware')

tea bowls<sup>2</sup> which stand out, but most of the room is roughly plastered and so without colour that it is almost monochromatic in its lack of distinguishing features. The overall effect, as one participant described it to me, is like being in the midst of a dense forest. This slightly claustrophobic atmosphere, and the position of the guests facing the host, tends to focus the attention on the preparation of tea. Again, here I want to concentrate not on the actions of the host, but on the sensuousness of the event.

The objects used in preparing and serving tea are all very different in size, weight, colour, substance and texture. The spatula used to measure out powdered green tea is made from bamboo, thin, light and delicate to hold. In contrast, the iron brazier which heats up the water is the largest and heaviest object to be used. The differences and particular qualities of these objects are clear to the host who employs them, and also to the guests who can appreciate, for example, the wisps of steam escaping from the mouth of the brazier and the slight rustle of the host's *kimono* as they reach forward to offer green tea to a guest. The quality of all these sensuous effects is made more distinctive by the absence of other distractions. Perhaps the most palpable quality for the host who prepares the tea is touch, since they must focus on handling and manoeuvring a variety of different objects in a precise manner. For the guest, the occasion at which they can make closest contact with that 'outer world' and 'draw' it into their sensuous 'inner world', is the moment when they drink the green tea that has been prepared for them. The tea, which has been whisked to a frothy consistency<sup>3</sup> on top dissolves almost immediately on contact with the mouth and offsets the bitter taste of the green liquid beneath.

According to the 'form' (*kata*) of the event, after finishing the tea the guest ought to take a little time to appreciate the bowl from which they have drunk, and the remainder of the liquid within it. This is one of a number of moments which relate to the sensate nature of the event and are formally ascribed aesthetic value. But what

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<sup>2</sup> *Karamono* ('Chinese-ware') tea bowls are only used occasionally.

<sup>3</sup> There are two types of green tea, one is thick and very bitter while the other, which is more common, is weaker and whisked up to a froth.

I am trying to describe here are some of the sensory qualities of *Chadō* which it is possible for participants to appreciate, not because they are a function of copying forms or because they may have aesthetic and spiritual value. They are appreciated because although they may do both of the above, they also appeal directly to the senses, heightening the body's awareness of itself and its environment.

This is a world of sensation, an 'inner world' to which practising *Shorinji Kempo* also gives access. But in *Shorinji Kempo*, sensuousness is centred on the tactility of performance rather than other qualities like smell and taste: and it is this quality of movement that preoccupies most practitioners during performance, as they attempt to copy forms. It is also the predominant subject of their conversations after training. The perceptions described to me were of having a tangible sense of very specific parts of the body, and being able to feel their relation to every other part of the body.

This feeling was connected to the particular mechanics of the movement being performed but was not a function of it. The term I shall use to describe this sensuous quality is 'contact', meaning to be in touch with, and appreciative of, the body's tactility. In the most recent attempt to apply the concept of mimesis to ethnographic examples, Michael Taussig (*Mimesis and Alterity* 1993) uses the term 'contact'. He proposes a two-layered notion of mimesis which I will take up and pursue in detail at this point, because it accounts for both the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts and for the embodied experiences and sensuous perception of practitioners. Firstly, he emphasises mimesis as a form of representation, an expression that involves copying. The other layer of mimesis is that of perception and experience which involves palpable, sensuous contact (1993: 21).

This notion of mimesis is drawn from an analysis of James Frazer's two classes of sympathetic magic discussed in *The Golden Bough* (1911) 'Magic of Contact' and 'Magic of Similarity or imitation'. Taussig argues that Frazer's idea of the copy in magical practices is compelling in the way that it has the power to affect 'the original to such a degree that the representation shares in or acquires the properties of the

represented' (ibid: 47). This is one of the fundamental assumptions behind the Zen arts: that each copy will manifest the aesthetic qualities of what is copied. The copy can evoke this original form by the 'literalness', or what Taussig calls the 'copiedness', of its imitation.

The question then is: in what way does the copy have to resemble the original in order for there to be a correspondence with what is being copied? Why does there need to be 'point for point correspondences of body part to body part' (ibid, 51) in every aspect of a performance? Why are these visual and literal details in the copy so powerfully evocative? Taussig suggests why when he quotes a passage from Horkheimer and Adorno's *'Dialectic of Enlightenment'* (1987) on the significance of Fascist regalia and Symbolism: 'The purpose of the Fascist formula, the ritual discipline, the uniforms, and the whole apparatus, which is at first sight irrational, is to allow mimetic behaviour. The carefully thought out symbols ..., the skulls and disguises, the barbaric drum beats, the monotonous repetition of words and gestures, are simply the organised imitation of magic practices, the mimesis of mimesis' (quoted in Taussig 1993: 63).

The Zen arts are not a 'counter-revolutionary movement', like Fascism, but Horkheimer and Adorno's comments about the potency of certain details necessary to foster mimetic action are fundamental to our understanding of the Zen arts. The dress, insignia, rules of behaviour and technical criteria in the Zen arts are all details which focus the attention and capture the imagination of participants. For *Shorinji Kempo* participants (clad in bright white uniforms, standing in rows, erect, silent and still, responding simultaneously and immediately to commands) these are vivid and visceral evocations of an aesthetic tradition which prompt mimetic behaviour. The order in and of action in the *Chadō* which dictates precisely how and when to move, sit, stand and address one another is designed to draw the participant into the precision of the copy, demanding of them a mimetic attitude to action. The potency of the detailed copy to evoke an original register of aesthetics and to cultivate mimetic action goes some way to explaining why the Zen arts are so precisely structured and why they resist change.

But a 'literal' copy does not reflect the perceptions of practitioners who must create and re-create it every time they perform. The emphasis on details and precision may encourage the appreciation of a good copy, but not of the embodied experiences of the practitioner. In terms of the way movement is taught and evaluated in the Zen arts, it is the visual qualities of form (the way it looks), rather than its sensual qualities (the way it feels) which takes precedence.

Those who practise *Chadō* may intend and desire their movement to be exact visual imitations but often their bodies let them down. What makes up for these transgressions and lack of similarity is the physical sense of contact with a sensuous 'inner world', and a correspondence between performers that emerges through practice; a relatedness based on contact. In any attempt to copy there will always be this element of contact. Becoming and being an image of something in practice cannot be based solely on an idea of the power of the copy.

We need to break away from the 'tyranny of the visual notion of the image' to 'where action puts forth its own image' (ibid: 58). Taussig is discussing 'less tangible qualities of presence, atmosphere and movement' (ibid: 57), which we came across earlier as 'personal presence' and 'embodied energy'. Like Taussig, I want to investigate 'the sticky webs of Copy and Contact, image and bodily involvement of the perceiver in the image' (ibid: 21). This network of associations is more elaborate, uncanny, and powerful than the use of terms like 'representation' and 'expression' can suggest.

In the following pages, I want to describe how the two-layered notion of the mimetic faculty reflects the practice and perception of those engaged with the Zen arts. As mimetic processes, I shall propose that a common element in all the Zen arts is the notion of the copy. This is reflected in the way that actions are learned and executed, leaving a physical residue 'written' on the body.



Learning any action in the Zen arts begins with 'observation' of form (*minari kikan*), literally meaning a 'period of learning through watching'; this is also the way that learning commences in a variety of educational spheres including schools and Zen temples. Observation is important because it is the basis from which students can start to imitate forms; it is indicated by the expression *kata de hajimeru*, 'learning starts with form'. In order for a student to enter into the aesthetic realm of experience they must also repeatedly imitate forms (*katachi de hairu*). These are the three aspects to learning any action in the Zen arts: Observation, Repetition and Imitation. A teacher always performs the movements first, creating a model of correct form for everybody else to copy. Then it is up to the students to concentrate their 'efforts' (*doryoku*) into correctly imitating their teacher's movements unceasingly. When I talked to practitioners about this learning process, they consistently referred to their teacher as the key to its success or failure. The skill and ease of a teacher's performance can be a source of inspiration, providing students with an example for their efforts, and an image of what it is possible to achieve.

Teachers tend to adjust their performance to the ability of the student, which may mean slowing down or repeating an action. The theory is that an action needs to be seen to be understood, although occasionally demonstrations are accompanied by an oral explanation. The position of the teacher, standing, or in the case of *Chadō*, sitting, where they can be seen, allows students to observe carefully and try to 'feel' with their eyes what the body of the teacher is doing. Using this image, the student tries to copy with their body what the teacher has just performed. For the most part they are unsuccessful, forgetting details, making mistakes and getting stuck with difficult manoeuvres. Concentrating on the reproduction of every aspect of an action means that it is rarely performed in its entirety. What usually results are fragments of movement, dislocated from the image of the original, and only partially resolved in the embodied experience of practitioners.

The final aspect of learning is repetition, which is more obvious in some of the Zen arts than others. In *Chadō*, actions are rarely repeated within a single session. Unless there has been a mistake, the movements are performed only once.

Repetition is a tool for learning *Chadō* in the sense that every time a student attends ceremony it should be a precise re-enactment of what has taken place before.

In *Shorinji Kempo* and other *Budō*, movements are always repeated many times, often while following a teacher's count from one to ten. Here, repetition is explicitly a means by which a student learns, and is not only for correcting mistakes. When bodies act in unison, performing the same movement with precision time after time, they acquire a palpable momentum and energy. There is a strong sense of a correspondence with other bodies, the ones that surround and the others that are imagined. Collectively, they give impetus to the practitioner's efforts, and this energy has the power to keep practitioners motivated when they are tired. Those with whom I have spoken soon after training like this find it difficult to put the experience into words but are often flushed with excitement. They do talk of feeling 'well' and 'energetic' (*genki*), a sort of visceral sense of exaltation. A useful analogy might be with the 'muscular bonding' that William McNeill (1995) has described as the result of soldiers 'keeping together in time' during military drill practice.

During *Chadō* this sense of collective effort is less palpable. It cannot be compared to military drill, because each participant, host or guest, acts alone and usually only once. There is a sense of correspondence with others, and although it is not experienced as intense physical effort, the sensate qualities of mimetic action are undiminished. Also, any action will be a copy of countless other copies, so even if one practises alone and cannot see those others, there is a tangible sense of their mimetic presence in the details of the copy.

In the actual execution of movement, there is rarely a moment when the body is not trying to adjust itself so as to accommodate all the details of correct form. Sometimes the teacher will place their hands on the body of a participant and directly correct the participant's form. This kind of attention to detail can make the embodied experience of copying more immediate and vital. In such instances, detail exaggerates the visceral element of contact in the copy. The heightened state of

physical awareness which comes with contact is not a property of the action, but is created by the body when it takes cognizance of itself. This is especially important in *Chadō* where the host acts alone and has little opportunity to correspond directly with the guest. It is by reproducing exactly the precise features of movement that the host's physical presence may expand to create an aura appreciable to others. Even if these others, be they guests or observers, are not aware of the significance of each movement (and this is often the case), they can appreciate the visual details, precision and grace in a body's movement.

The aspect of training in *Shorinji Kempo* which most closely coincides with the creation of this aura is *kata*. As a patterned and prearranged series of actions, these are performed alone and are designed to teach and express form. There is no proper functional or relational aspect to *kata*. It is not a combative technique and there is no confrontation with any other practitioner. The purpose of performing *kata* is to develop a mimetic ability and reproduce forms of aesthetic value, by concentrating on the visual qualities of action.

Participants of the Zen arts often take pleasure in these visual features and not only in a developing ability to copy movement. Many of the women who come to practice *Chadō* plainly enjoy wearing and commenting upon *kimono*. Similarly, those who practise *Shorinji Kempo* are sometimes acutely aware of the small differences in the style of uniforms (*dogi*) and the manner in which they are worn. Imitating the small distinctions in the dress sense of an admired teacher has become for many an extension to imitating their movement. So pervasive is the power of the copy in the Zen arts of today, exhibited in ways of learning and executing action and stimulated by their excessive detail, that it is possible to talk of the '*Culture of the Copy*' (Schwartz 1996). Reproducible visual media such as illustrated textbooks and videos are rapidly superseding the authority of the teacher, as will be shown shortly.

However, a sense of the Zen arts that is based solely on its visual elements and their reproducibility overlooks the way in which any copy is infused with the energy and presence of the performer. Copying the visual features of a movement, fitting one's

body into the right shapes is not a passive process but 'active - yielding' to borrow Taussig's phrase (1993: 46). The trend to become caught up and lose oneself in the environment and action of training reveals not only the power of the copy but also the embodied energies of the participant. It is a process of allowing (not submitting) the body to be disciplined, contorted and reproduced in another image.

There are training halls where the regimes of training are so compelling that participants appear not just to 'yield' to an imperative to copy but to lose themselves to it. One such place is in the city of Kyoto, and was only the second training hall ever to be built in Japan for the practice of *Shorinji Kempo*. The teacher is a *Jōdo-shū* ('Pure Land') Buddhist priest who reconstructed and extended part of his temple for training purposes. Students at this centre are part of a group that distinguishes itself from others by the formality and intensity of its training regime. What makes the regime compelling is the structure and orderliness of training in which there is no time or space without purpose. Every class follows an established pattern which the new student or visitor learns by copying and repeating what the more experienced members do. Watching and training beside others who are intently performing the same movements in unison can have a tremendous impact on the senses. For when performers move and shout (*kiai*) together there is an explosion of body-action and a roar of sound. When this effect is repeated many times over it is possible to be drawn into mimesis. This experience of being 'drawn into' mimesis is a transition to a different state of consciousness, but the nature of it is very difficult to describe. On the one hand, participants speak of the very positive and self-affirming experience of this practice, at the same time they also describe the sense of a loss of self-consciousness, and many practitioners mention that they become unaware of all their normal, everyday concerns and worries. In whatever way we describe or define this state of consciousness, it is clearly linked to the practice of copying; but however powerful the impulse to copy may be, it also demands a great deal of embodied energy to sustain itself. There are occasions when, usually as a result of tiredness from work, participants are 'enduring' (*gaman suru*), if not strongly resenting, the imposition of this kind of regime on the body. In other words, to

continue to yield to such a regime of training says as much about the embodied energy of participants as it does about a compulsion to copy.

There are also sites of training in the Zen arts where the power of the copy appears to be incidental, if not irrelevant to what is going on. At one rural centre for *Chadō* where I have practised, little attempt was ever made to observe carefully the proper order and form of movement. The participants were a small but enthusiastic group of women from the neighbourhood, who met once a week at the tea-room in their teacher's home.

Even before the event began, conversation turned to friends, local issues and inevitably their visitor, myself. Often there were impromptu pauses in the movements of whoever was acting as host, to respond to the conversation. Above all, this was a social gathering, an occasion where relationships were developed. Why then, did they go to all the trouble and expense of learning and performing *Chadō* when a 'coffee shop' (*Kissaten*), might be a more convenient environment?

The answer lies partly in the ease and familiarity of this particular tea-room: not within a public training centre, but a friend's house, among women who lived together in a small rural town and already knew each other. When I asked the women why they came to do *Chadō* in particular and not meet somewhere else: they were always apologetic about their lack of a serious attitude to practice, but enthusiastic about the 'rare' (*mezurashii*) and 'special' (*tokubetsuna*) opportunity, *Chadō* gave them for interaction. *Chadō* provided a common ground and a common purpose for participants to meet one another. As a form of mimesis, it drew the women together and fostered extra contact between them. It gave shape, form and meaning to their existing relationships.

This kind of approach to practising the Zen arts is not peculiar to *Chadō*, or to rural women with time on their hands. We have already seen, in the method of practice of the *Shorinji Kempo* teacher Mori Sensei, another instance of the 'contact' in the copy. Mori Sensei taught *Shorinji Kempo* as he practised it, through close personal

and physical contact with all of his students. It was this unique style, manifested through his presence, which drew students to him and gave them a purpose for training.

Significantly though, his style was so difficult to copy and his method of practise so unstructured, that in spite of his reputation very few students ever came to train. Often I was one of only three or four students, and the class would begin by Mori Sensei asking us casually what we were interested in knowing about that week. What drew us to him and inspired us to continue was, as everyone in the class continually reiterated, the combination of his remarkable skill and charisma; what I have called his 'personal presence'. Mori Sensei's method of training was not based on the copy, i.e. the repeated imitation of any action. It was based on the development of an embodied energy through sensitive contact with others, a form of what Walter Benjamin has called, in another context, 'tactile knowing' (quoted in Taussig 1993: 25) but is better referred to by Andrew Strathern's phrase: '*Body Thoughts*' (1996) which are acquired in those moments when copying merges with contact. It is the kind of embodied knowledge that emerges in a performance from: 'the recognition of one's self via the other, as when one feels one's skin goes through the caress of another and with their hands I feel my skin' (Adams 1996: 76). So it is not really 'knowing' at all, but a 'relating to' (Taussig 1993: 26).

The point of using terms like 'tactile knowing' and 'body thoughts' is to demonstrate that the Zen arts are not experienced entirely as they are supposed to be practised: by observation, imitation and repetition. Running through these processes is sensuousness and a feeling which is not 'located in the head ... but rather in the place where we see it' (ibid: 38), in the hand that grasps and in the taste of bitter green tea. So it is not knowledge in the sense of 'I know', but rather 'I feel' or 'I taste'. This is perhaps one reason why Mori Sensei always ended his remarks on the quality of a movement by saying 'I think this is so' (*to-omoimasu*).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is a common and polite way of expressing oneself in Japanese. But its use by Mori Sensei, a distinguished and highly respected teacher, in this learning environment, is unusual.



This is the power of mimesis, firstly to represent an Other, enchanted realm and in doing so to empower the self, but also to create relationships with other people, to make contact. However, using the body in this manner is difficult, because the body is unpredictable and liable to do the unintended. This is why it needs a form to copy. We saw earlier the power of this copy in drawing women together to do *Chadō*, when they could more easily have met to gossip elsewhere.

In the absence of the copy, contact is unpredictable and volatile. The practice of *Randoori* or 'free fighting' in *Shorinji Kempo* has no fixed forms to copy, only a few rules for interaction. The potential in these kinds of encounters is for action to become violent and contact to be confrontational and disruptive. This is why *randoori* is the most difficult and contentious aspect of *Shorinji Kempo*, and is restricted to advanced and experienced practitioners.

The physical repertoire of the Zen arts is premised on the power of the copy and in, each individual action or technique there is a threshold for contact. This threshold or relational aspect of the act can only be articulated with the embodiment of the copy. Practitioners, therefore always have to perform themselves into being. They occupy an ambiguous position, both inside and outside the movement, participant and observer. This is not 'liminality' in Victor Turner's sense because it is both positions at once, a representation and a re-presentation.

The Zen arts are effective as mimetic acts because through the visual aspects of the copy and sensuous aspects of contact, they are able to have imputed to them a generic tradition and a personal identity. This two-layered notion of mimesis as copy and contact is captured in Benjamin's phrase the 'tactility of vision' (1970). Increasingly, however, practitioners appear to perceive the Zen arts through a 'vision of tactility'. The expansion of increasingly sophisticated media technologies to represent and teach the Zen arts constitutes a new way for practitioners to think about their practice - through visual knowledge. In the next and final part of this chapter, I want to examine this new type of knowledge that is not contained by the

Japanese vocabulary for the Zen arts because it is sensate in other ways, and also explore its relation to the embodied 'tactile knowing' of practitioners.

Thus far, I have considered the Zen arts in terms of their movement structures and aesthetic qualities. It is with reference to an aesthetic vocabulary of values (and corresponding states of mind) that the Zen arts tend to be discussed. They have been represented textually throughout their history, with various books recording rules and criteria for their proper execution. But it is only relatively recently in the last one hundred years or so (since the Meiji period - 1868) that visual images have become the dominant means for practitioners to represent the Zen arts. The ascription of aesthetic value now rests largely upon the reproduction of the visual elements of practice.<sup>5</sup> The visual aspects of practice have become increasingly important for the ways in which practitioners think about their participation, and also reveal the impact of modern life and consumer culture on the Zen arts. This is clear from the commercialisation of objects and materials valued for their visual properties, and from the utilisation of new visual technologies which help practitioners to become better at copying forms. By 'visual technologies', I mean both still-images (line-drawing and photography) and moving images (video and computer graphics). There are important differences between these two technologies, but I will not dwell on them because as representations of the Zen arts, both hide the psychological aspect of their aesthetic qualities (as states of mind), and refashion them according to a pictorial code. The visual representation of the Zen arts has tended to recontextualise practice, shifting aesthetic value from the visceral qualities of movement to the visual. That is what I will focus on here, a discussion of visual technologies and their implications for performers. The relationship of the Zen arts to commerce and industry is relevant to a discussion about visual representation, but better left (see chapter seven) to where it can be understood as part of wider socio-historical movements.

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<sup>5</sup> By 'visual elements' I also mean uniforms and other symbols.

There is an artistic discipline, supplementary to *Chadō*, which reflects very clearly the predominance of a visual approach to practising the Zen arts. This is *ikebana* or 'flower-arrangement' which have always had strong associations with *Chadō*, displays being placed in an alcove of the tea-room. However, *ikebana* has taken on a much wider public appeal, and can now be learnt by ordinary members of the public who may have no interest in *Chadō*. In *ikebana* each student works alone, selecting and shaping flowers and small branches into a particular form. These forms are a creative imitation of the ways in which flowers are imagined to occur in nature. So in *ikebana* it is not the body of the student that is required to be mimetic, but the material substance of the flowers. However, like the other Zen arts which do employ the body, the relationship between form and aesthetic value is held to be the same.

On the first day that I arrived to start learning *ikebana*, the teacher handed me a book, '*Ikebana for Everybody*' (1975), written by Houn Ohara, her teacher and head of the Ohara School. The book described in detailed diagrams and pictures exactly how an arrangement should be created. (FIGURE 1.) The placement of each flower and branch was determined by the angle of its relationship to the other flowers and to the container. Most of the other students at the centre also had a copy of the book, or photocopies of diagrams from it. The less experienced often referred to them as they worked on their arrangements.

The teacher opened the book to a section which explained a simple arrangement, and using the diagrams as a guide, explained what I should do. If I were to have 'problems' (*mondai*), she said I could always refer back to these pictures to know what was correct. As the teacher, she was of course there to help if need be, but the emphasis was on learning by oneself, with a book. So, like the other students around me, I placed the book to one side, in a place where I could see it as I worked. The teacher left me, and as she circulated around the work benches, surveying the handiwork of others, often referred to their open books in support of her comments and criticisms.

Everybody was bent over their arrangements, intent on their work and the diagrams beside them. It was not necessary to try to remember everything the teacher had said, because it was recorded in the diagrams. Furthermore, these were authoritative diagrams, approved by the teachers' teacher; an original source of knowledge. In the process of construction there was no need to fill in the gaps in memory or understanding with a creative gesture, here everything was outlined in detail, and one only had to reproduce those details for the copy to be correct, or so it appeared.

When any arrangement was completed, the teacher came to inspect the result of our efforts. As before, when she explained the arrangement prior to construction, her comments and criticisms were couched mostly in rational, logical terms and only occasionally referred to the aesthetic value of a shape. But if a flower stem was not positioned at its prescribed angle of elevation then the teacher might also make an aesthetic judgement saying that the 'shape did not bend as it would in a natural setting' (*Shizen no Katachi dewa nain desu*). In other words, it was often not enough merely to try and reproduce visual diagrams, because they were connected to more abstract aesthetic sensibilities. Why bother at all to use diagrams as an aid to practice? If the purpose of training were to create forms of aesthetic quality, then why not give explanations purely in those terms?

To answer these questions we must examine the origins of, and assumptions behind, the use of visual media in the Zen arts. How do the practitioners of today use and manipulate diagrams, photographs, video recordings and even computer graphics, and what can this tell us about how they perceive their participation?

It is important to note that I am not, here, looking at the mass media production of popular images of the Zen arts, asking how they have had an impact on the idea of the Zen arts in Japanese society at large. The forms of visual media I am referring to are produced by and for the community of practitioners who appear to be increasingly fascinated by these simulacra. I am intrigued by their fascination, because it raises questions about the assumption that 'real' practice is purely aesthetic.

I shall argue that it is partly through visual media that the Zen arts have come to be perceived as objects of knowledge and classification.<sup>6</sup> A visual orientation to the Zen arts, through the use of diagrams, for example, makes it possible to order the world of form according to clear principles. It allows action to be pinned down, measured and compared, making movement not only visible but visualised.

Establishing clear principles for movement through these visual means is the basis for a theory of the Zen arts as a body of knowledge, that can be acquired through skill in copying. Visual images of movement offer a means not only of enhancing and reinforcing the classification of members by grades, according to their technical expertise but can also potentially be used to connect action to a system of evaluation. However, as documents of the experience of practice, these visual images are always going to be unsettling to practitioners, because they are framed by the values and agendas of the institutions or individuals that produced them as tools for study.

The adoption and spread of modes of a visual orientation in the Zen arts is part of wider social movements in Japan. Miriam Silverberg (1995) has described this visual orientation as *modān seikatsu* an aspect of 'modern living'. But it may be more useful here to place it in a wider historical perspective, as part of what Timon Screech has called the 'Western Scientific Gaze' (1996).

Screech dates the emergence of this distinctive way of seeing the world to the encounters between European traders and the Japanese during the Edo period (1603-1868). These encounters, almost entirely with the Dutch, were so limited that one cannot talk properly of 'influence', as much as 'co-option' by the Japanese of their new ideas, known as *rangaku* (Screech 1996: 1). Nevertheless, *rangaku* had profound implications for the way the Japanese continued to look at the world. As Screech puts it, 'Before these encounters it ('sight') had previously been imagined as something discursive or extrapolatory, moving from object to object associatively, or

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<sup>6</sup> An hierarchical ranking system, with progress gauged by the reproduction of a certain level of technique, also contributing to this perception.

traversing the seen and unseen by passing along links that were historic, artistic or poetic but not coordinated by logic' (1996: 2).

The Dutch traders introduced the Japanese to a new 'regime of visibility', which had its origins in the work of philosophers of the Enlightenment, emphasising order and rational thinking through observation.<sup>7</sup> It was an investigative and penetrative way of looking, that aimed at an understanding by getting inside things and recording what was there. Screech calls it an 'anatomising stare' (1996: 3). Western theories of visual representation are more complex than the Japanese interpretation of *rangaku*, as outlined by Screech.<sup>8</sup> I am making an argument for a broad connection between a Japanese theory of vision (as described by Screech) and the current use and perception of visual media by practitioners of the Zen arts. Japanese terms for looking at pictures reflect continuing concerns for 'capturing reality' (*shajitsu*) or 'depicting authenticity' (*shashin*). This latter term has since been used to refer to the photographic image.

The importance of this mode of seeing to religious and spiritual concerns shown by the reliance of current practitioners of the Zen arts on visual media, is also anticipated at this early stage. A popular cult of this time, called *Shingaku* ('Heart Learning') suggested that just as the Buddha was supposed to look with detachment and see what was hidden within, so too did the lens of the microscope: 'When *shingaku* and *rangaku* came together, it was as if the Buddhas were looking through microscopes, the ethical realm laid bare by the fine but sweeping Western scientific gaze' (ibid 1996: 5).

The same kind of assumption underlies the use of visual media in the Zen arts of today. The assumption behind the utilisation of modern mechanisms like photography, which gives the visual image its power, is that it duplicates the way natural vision works. It produces a document that appears to mirror optical

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<sup>7</sup> Visuality is not vision in the sense of physiological fact, but refers to 'those interpersonal strategies known as the 'visuality of an age' (Screech 1996: 2).

<sup>8</sup> For further discussion of the history of visual representation see Jonathan Cary's *Techniques of the Observer - on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (1996).



experience and is undistorted by the interpretation and emotion of practical situations. But the content and quality of what is communicated in an image when it has been adapted into the frame of a photograph is an abstraction from actual embodied experience. It takes the performance out of context and enhances only its technical characteristics. The subject who performs in photographs is not entirely devoid of personal presence, for an 'inner state' is made visible through the literal qualities of movement, fixed by the image. Discussions that I had while looking at pictures with other participants often turned from the technical to the personal, and judgements were made about character and personality on the basis of the way performers were pictured doing techniques. I am not suggesting that it is the intentions of those who take and use these photographs to try and read the interior conditions of their subjects, like the phrenologists and physiognomists of the nineteenth century. What we have in these pictures is a failure of the aesthetic ideal, as participants are moved by pictures that are, in terms of the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts, doubly removed: representations of representations of a state of mind.

The power of visual media to persuade practitioners of the Zen arts to use them as a means for teaching and learning, is the power of the copy. They are effective because they reproduce and enhance the fundamental principles of learning the Zen arts: Observation, Imitation and Repetition. Visual images can be treated like the body of a teacher, that is as a copy which mirrors an original. However, in this image there is no sense of the immediate presence and embodied contact with others that comes from actual performance.

It is significant that the use of visual media as mimetic devices has a wider relevance, beyond the particularities of the Zen arts. In the practice of most sports in Japan a great deal of attention is paid to various visual media, as the efficient means to improve, measure and compare skill. For example, many of the national newspapers, like *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, carry daily photospreads of expert golfers demonstrating their technique and during break periods shopkeepers and office workers can often be seen rehearsing their golfing skills.

This is not movement as 'skill' (*waza*), but technique; a body of knowledge to be studied, copied and mastered. It is an approach which is integral to the regimes of training in all Japanese sports and artistic disciplines. Photographs and other visual media do not merely supplement training and verbal description, they replace it. Copying becomes the goal, not simply the means to it, and knowledge is expertly and endlessly reproduced. This is 'automimesis': mimesis as an end in itself.

At the headquarters of *Shorinji Kempo*, a large temple complex off the Japanese mainland on the island of Shikoku, teachers take modern visual modes of teaching and learning very seriously. There are members of staff at the temple who work full time devising more efficient methods for students to understand how to move correctly. The results of these efforts are a number of detailed textbooks, some instructional videos, and now a computer programme with an advanced graphics package. In seminars at the temple, instructors teach according to rational scientific principles, drawing diagrams on blackboards to illustrate each point of their explanation. Students bring notebooks and their own video cameras, to document this information.

As the teacher demonstrates and explains practitioners sit, watch and mentally record, so that in break periods they can fill in their notebooks. Not all practitioners document technique like this but those that do are admired for their enthusiasm. Those practitioners with video cameras don't have to wait and remember what was demonstrated because during the lesson they position themselves around the teachers, seeking the best angle to capture the technique on tape, rather than concentrating on the immediacy of the situation. There is a strong sense in which the amassing of recorded material as notes, diagrams, pictures, and video tape is regarded as an accumulation of knowledge. It is not the kind of qualitative knowledge based on the embodied experience that comes from participation. It is knowledge based on the observation and scientific analysis of movement. Unlike the body, which is often inconsistent in performance, these documents fix and fit the body in an image.

Even if the participant is unable to achieve the same standard of performance as an image of a skilful teacher, they nevertheless possess a copy of that performance that can be reviewed and reduced to rational principles. This is one reason why visual information such as textbooks and video tapes, is so popular with practitioners. Such media provide something more solid and durable than practitioners' own embodied experiences for them to assess and compare amongst each other. Knowledge in these visual media forms becomes something to possess and to be possessed by. They lend the stamp of authority to their user, who by virtue of possessing knowledge is at least some way towards embodying it. As such, the visual image can attract and inspire students with a version of what it is possible to achieve, and how one might go about reproducing a desired level of skill.

Among many teachers and some students there is a resistance to these developments. They worry about the proliferation and use of visual media, because it undermines both the authority of the teacher and the authenticity of the experience of participation. If students look to their textbooks, not to a teacher, for an original version, and their attention is diverted away from sensory contact with others, then the whole philosophy of practice would appear to be in doubt.

One teacher who is concerned with these developments, Yamazaki Sensei, holds one of the most senior positions in the organisation as 'World technical chief instructor'. He forbids students in his classes to use video cameras or to take notes while he is teaching, because, he argues, they will not be able to 'see' (*mie-nai*) what he is doing. It is interesting that although he is worried by the use of visual media, he explains his concerns in this way. But Yamazaki Sensei is not talking about sight in the physiological sense, but about a type of 'vision' that is non-scientific, because it is a way of seeing with the 'heart/mind' (*kokoro*). The phrase which Yamazaki sensei used was *kan wa kokoro* meaning that at the 'heart' (*kokoro*) of seeing is the 'intuitive mind' (*kan*). Donn Draegar describes this as 'psychical sight' which unlike normal vision 'sees' beyond the literal qualities of movement (1973: 28-29). 'Psychical sight' leads to a perception of movement that cannot easily be explained,

recorded or reproduced except by embodied experience, in performance. In contrast, the possession of visual media gives any participant, whatever their level of experience and skill, a substitute means to represent movement.

A visual image of a movement can project a unifying vision, which by its composition fixes action, and imbues it with the power of authority and truth. This power is derived from an assumption that the image is a record of what 'really' existed (unlike experience) and that it reproduced that reality from a teacher who is an original source. From this assumption, the distinction between the actual experienced event and the visualised event is blurred. The image is 'more real than the real', or as participants say: 'the really real' (*Hontō no waza*), because it is technically exact. This is the power of the copy as image - to represent authenticity. Like the aesthetic register of terms, visual media images represent authenticity because they are fixed and do not change like physical experience. What goes unstated in all of this is that the visual image is staged and constructed. This is not to suggest that actual embodied performances are spontaneous, for much of what takes place is anticipated by prior experience. But there is a significant element of unpredictability which is missing in the rehearsed, staged, and recorded encounter.

In the visual image, each movement is logical, fluid, orderly and coherent like a corpus of knowledge; there is no sense of 'presence' and sensory contact between performers. The experience presented in visual reproductions is only a fragment of the whole event. Photographs, for example, reduce the event to a single image or series of images, exploiting the mimetic character of the Zen arts and isolating it from the social and sensuous human encounter. Practitioners of *Shorinji Kempo*, and especially the organisation which runs it, are aware of these shortcomings in photographs, and ever-more sophisticated technologies have been employed to try and create more accurate reproductions. Video has provided the means to overcome the limitation of single snapshots of action, documenting movement that flows, but can also be slowed down, stopped, and repeated.

The most advanced mode of visual reproduction so far devised is a computer graphics programme created in conjunction with the sports science department of a major Japanese University. This programme, unlike video, allows the user to view a technique from a multiplicity of different angles. It is a purely functional, automimetic device and cannot convey the atmosphere and presence of a performance. The philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin has called what has been erased the 'aura' (Benjamin 1973).<sup>9</sup> The programme aims to be nothing more or less than a totally technical reproduction. The subjects are anonymous stick figures, silhouetted against a plain dark background, executing movements with robotic precision. (FIGURE 2.)

The limitations of the visual image in representing the 'aura' of an event are usefully and prophetically outlined in Benjamin's seminal essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*: 'with the close up, space expands; with slow motion movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear, it reveals entirely new structural features of the subject. So too, slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones which far from looking like retarded rapid movements give the effects of singularly gliding, floating, supernatural motions' (1970: 229-230).

What Benjamin has identified here is the capacity of mimetic machines such as camera to displace sensuousity or what he calls the 'physiognomic' aspect of the event. That is to say that through the construction and use of artificially reproduced visual images participants run the risk of losing touch with, or at least redefining, the sense of their embodied practice. The body is fragmented into parts which are objectified and isolated from the whole, reducing it to a collection of physical facts. The position of the body and its paths through space can be established and fixed. Taken collectively, the constructions of visual media in the Zen arts almost constitute an atlas of the body. (Figures 3 and 4.)

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<sup>9</sup> W. Benjamin was describing the probable effects of mechanical automata on the perception of Art.

These pictures deliver idealised versions of bodies, manipulating, by pose and caption, expectations of how they are supposed to look and behave. In practice, however, bodies are not so easily captured, and resist exact definition. Taken together, the visual image and ethnography do not produce a single, integrated physical figure. As much as the image reveals an idealised body, as part of a system of knowledge, it conceals sensuousity, reflecting the agendas of the individuals and institutions that produced it.

The construction and use of visual media may have obscured the body's sensuousity, but has also led to a democratisation of knowledge. No longer confined to the training hall and restricted to the demonstrations of the teacher, information circulates much more widely and freely through visual media. It has led to challenges to the authority of the teacher, who can no longer claim unequivocally the power to singularly represent and reproduce an authentic, original version. This is why a great deal of information is still carefully guarded and only released to those senior students who it is felt are able to use it properly, as an aid, not an alternative to practice.

The availability and use of visual media has opened up a debate, contesting local practices, the teacher's authority, and even the individual's body. Ultimately, these debates are about who and what has the power to represent the Zen arts. Rather than establishing an orthopraxy, which is the intention behind the officially produced media it has led to a diversification of styles of practice: an omnipraxy. This is particularly the case with those practitioners who now have their own equipment to make video recordings. Practitioners now have an alternative to their teacher's version and are able to choose from a variety of different sources, to potentially establish their own style of practice. In other words, technological innovations have actually enriched the variety of ways in which the Zen arts can be practised as exercises in technique.



It is no longer possible to make clear distinctions between embodied approaches to practice and the use of visual media. Even those who, like Mori Sensei, teach and perform through physical contact with others, are also engaged in making their own visual records. Mori Sensei has invested a great deal of money and time in producing a series of videos that will document and explain his method to others. It is a project he takes very seriously because he feels that it will not be too long before he is unable to practice on a full time basis. The video will be his legacy to others.

Usually in his spare time at weekends, but also during a class, Mori sets up his video camera, lights, and backcloth in the training-hall. Members of his class are asked to take part so that Mori has students to demonstrate with. They take it in turns to stand in front of the camera with Mori and perform. Often the camera is made to zoom in on a particular part of the body, important in the execution of the movement. The participants move about so that the camera can record from the best angle. It is a painstaking process. The sessions sometimes last two or three hours and only cover two or three different techniques. But although the completed tapes are tremendously detailed, they are extremely difficult to learn from. Senior instructors who have received copies of his video write back to say that they do not understand what he is trying to do; they cannot in their words 'see' it. The problems in recording Mori's method illustrate precisely the weakness of any visual medium to reproduce movement.

Mori's method, more than any other instructor's is premised on developing an embodied relationship with others. It cannot be seen, only felt through the body. Without this embodied experience it is impossible to understand what he is doing. All that remains is an image of Mori performing in a manner that is disconcerting because there are so few visual clues to copy in his method. The image is suggestive, but it cannot explain what his performance is like in practice.

Mori's video is confusing when presented as an aid to learning how to become skilful. As with all other visual media, video recordings of technical processes are fundamentally flawed as representations of the 'aura' of any event. But this does not

mean that visual media cannot be used in other ways that do not depend on them being efficient visual tools for practice. There is a social dimension to using visual media evident on the occasions when members of the same training-centre gather to watch a video together. At such times in Mori's training hall, members arrange themselves around the television set, and as they watch the video tape, seem to take as much pleasure in one another's company as they do in the expertise of the recorded display. The video provides a version of practice that can be watched, commented on and even joked about from a distance, without the physicality of contact. It was an alternative to actual practice, sometimes even a relief from it. Few of those who watched the video may have learnt anything that they could not directly and acutely understood through practice, but in the praise for and comments about Mori's visual display, there was no-one who did not recognise and identify with the differences from other methods. In this way, Mori's video became a concrete record of the distinctiveness of the regime within which his members practised, identifying themselves firstly as Mori's students, before being *Shorinji Kempo* practitioners.

There are common elements in the construction and use of visual media which obscure the sensory and 'auratic' aspects of practice. But rather than this leading to an orthopraxy, visual media have been used by Zen arts practitioners in ways other than the purpose for which they were created. Treated as objects of value and distinction, they are used in practice to express aspects of the relationships between practitioners.

I have addressed the various ways in which practitioners engage with the Zen arts: through an aesthetic register of values, through physical practice, and through visual images. These three related aspects disclose different experiences of being a practitioner. They are all mimetic, opening up different capacities for copy and contact. In the aesthetic vocabulary and visual imagery there is little sense of the embodiment, relatedness and sociality of practice. Instead there are forms and criteria for copying and expressing aesthetic value, and in terms of sustaining the

theories that distinguish and enchant practice, this referential dimension to practice is crucial.

So powerful is the presentation of aesthetic value and visual imagery that they have come to appear more real than the actual experience of doing *Chadō* or *Shorinji Kempo*. The point is that for practitioners today there are other versions, which are separate from, but have consequences for, the experience of taking part. They may interrupt and change their approach to participation. Both the aesthetic register and visual media obscure self-expression by channelling it in certain directions and by fixing its representation in words and images. Although creativity is going on underneath the surface appearances, manifested as embodied energy, it is the representative value of any act which predominates. Many of those who practice, perhaps the majority at some time, desire to be taken away from the experience of their everyday lives into a different place; a space of imagined tradition. In the next section, I want to restore the context to this imagined tradition, by grounding the experiences of participants in the time and space of particular sites.

## Chapter 5

### Structuring Relations - the Power of Person and Place

We have seen that the idea of the Zen arts as a representation of Japanese Culture is tied to an aesthetic register, which in performance is re-presented by individual practitioners. An idea of Japanese tradition is also manifested in the Zen arts through the *iemoto* system of hierarchical organisation and authority. The founding principle of this system is that it structures the involvement, and determines the status, of every participant. However, in the religio-aesthetic theory of the Zen arts, performance and accomplishment reflect a state of mind and are directly opposed to any notion that they can be equated with rank. The issue is the same as it was for the relationship between a representative form and pure experience which should be 'formless'. That contradiction was resolved through an aesthetic register which simultaneously referred to particular states of mind. It is through another mystical register of notions such as *ishin-denshin* ('transmitting ideas from mind-to-mind'), *amae* ('intimacy and dependence'), *ma* ('presencing through spatial/temporal absences'), and *haragei* ('the unspoken way') that the *iemoto* system is held to cultivate an 'intuitive unity of consciousness among all who participate' (Heine 1995: 34). As Steven Heine writes, 'The *iemoto* structure fosters exclusive, hierarchical and non rational bonding relations as found in artistic and esoteric traditions, which constitute a "way" (*dō* or *michi*) of self-discipline and etiquette' (ibid: 41-42).

This is the theory of the manner in which the *iemoto* system should operate in the Zen arts. In the next two chapters I will investigate this theory in relation to the history of the *iemoto* system, and its operation in particular contexts in which I participated. The aim is to show how ways of establishing and maintaining the authority of the *iemoto* can be more important than the exercise of skills which the system is supposed to organise and control. The *iemoto* system operates most successfully for practitioners, on the symbolic level, as an idea of the culture of the

Zen arts and of the culture of Japan. This analysis will broadly reflect the criticisms that I made in the last two chapters, of the aesthetic register of the Zen arts.

P.G. O'Neill, in '*Organisation and Authority in the Traditional Arts*' of Japan identifies four main criteria:

- (i) *Iemoto*, 'Hereditary succession'.
- (ii) *Manabu*, 'Imitation and Repetition'.
- (iii) *Sensei/Deshi*, 'Hierarchy'.
- (iv) *Giri/Ninjō*, 'Obligation/Human feelings'

(1984: 635-637).

One of these criteria *manabu* ('Imitation and Repetition') has already been discussed. The other three aspects: hereditary succession, hierarchy, and obligation/human feelings are related parts of the *iemoto* system of organisation in the field of the arts. *Iemoto* means literally the 'family-source' (*ie-moto*) or 'origin of the house' and refers, as we saw in chapter one, to an hereditary family unit or group of the arts. It is directly related to the concept of *ie* ('household'), which has become one of the basic units in models for the interpretation of Japanese society.

According to the principle of hereditary succession, the power and authority of the *iemoto* ultimately resides in one person, the head of the school, and is passed on to his oldest male heir.<sup>1</sup> Cross-cutting, and on occasion supplanting, this hereditary principle is the power of the skilful practitioner to achieve a position of authority, sometimes even becoming the *iemoto* themselves. More important than skill,<sup>2</sup> however, is the ability to achieve grades, get a licence for the right to teach and examine others, and possibly to have a special name bestowed upon oneself. These are achievements rewarded on the basis of sustained 'effort' (*doryoku*), rather than skill, and as the Zen arts are practised today, they are the most comprehensive forms of authority for a practitioner to have.

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<sup>1</sup> There are exceptions to this rule in some schools of Japanese dance where hereditary succession is sometimes passed to women.

<sup>2</sup> I am referring to 'skill' (*waza*) as the ability to perform and manifest aesthetic criteria, different from 'technique', which is the means to pass examinations.

In the case of *Shorinji Kempo*, the present *iemoto* is the daughter of the founder, Doshin So, and is known officially as 'Kanchō-So Doshin'. Although she cannot practice *Shorinji Kempo* due to a physical condition, she succeeded to her father's position in the absence of a male heir, and according to his wishes. Her authority within the organisation rests largely on 'ascription', or the 'blood' tie with her father, but also on her ability to interpret his philosophy publicly. She represents the teachings and the technical tradition of *Shorinji Kempo*, and when certificates are passed out for success in an examination they are awarded in her name. It is up to other senior members, teachers who are not related to the founder except perhaps by personal experience, to establish and maintain criteria for actually practising and improving techniques. There are always opportunities for practitioners to become well-known on the basis of their skill alone. These individuals are often among the most charismatic and respected practitioners of *Shorinji Kempo*. However, their positions - based not on blood, rank, or personal contact with the founder - are not validated by the hierarchical structure of the organisation.

Ascription and achievement by grade are the two fundamental organising principles for structuring the *iemoto* which can be offset or affirmed by skill. The tension between these three features of the *iemoto*: ascription, achievement and skill, is evident in the early history of the *iemoto* as a system for organising *Chadō*.

After the controversial death of Sen Rikyū, who is regarded as the founder of modern *Chadō*, it was not possible to elect immediately a successor, and there were multiple claims from kin and non-kin to his authority. The strongest blood candidate who emerged was not Sen Rikyū's eldest son, Dōan, but his adopted son-in-law Shōan. However, Shōan was never officially sanctioned by Sen Rikyū, nor was he considered particularly expert at *Chadō*. Nevertheless, he trained the next candidate who became a recognised master, Sen Sōtan. As a master of *Chadō* and grandson to Sen Rikyū, the credentials and authority of Sen Sōtan seemed to promise an orderly succession. But his relaxed attitude to this issue led eventually to a division of the Sen lineage into three main branches and numerous subsections (*bunke*). These three main branches were all self-defined *iemoto*, but similar in terms of structure and



organisation; distinctions between them came to be made on the basis of their style of practice (Anderson 1991: 83-85).

The tension between ascription, achievement and skill may have led, on occasion, to disputes and challenges to a leader's authority, but the *iemoto* system has nevertheless persisted as one of the organising principles of the arts from the seventeenth century. The strength of the *iemoto* principle of hereditary succession is that it has accommodated changing circumstances, most notably the vast increases in the size of organisations during the post-Meiji (after 1868) period. Prior to the reorganisation and popularisation of the traditional arts in this period, most schools were small-scale 'family groups', where ascription was still the dominant organising principle. Increasingly, however, the hereditary power of the *iemoto* was changed and displaced by the principle of achievement. In the practice of the Zen arts today, the closer we get to 'local' levels of involvement and the training centres where regular training takes place, the more distant or symbolic the hereditary authority of the *iemoto* becomes.

I mean two things by referring to the *iemoto* as 'symbolic'. Firstly, that the *iemoto*, as perceived by participants today, is part of a 'traditionalist' discourse which has tried to establish a theory of Japaneseness. There have been a number of discourses, ongoing throughout the 'modern' period (since 1868) which have used the *iemoto* to construct an idea of Japan and I shall discuss them shortly. The important point here is that as an aspect of these discourses, the power of the *iemoto* is not based on its structure, but on its usefulness and application as a symbolic resource for practitioners. This is the second point about the symbolism of the *iemoto* - its hereditary power does not have to be a living or present individual, but can be expressed by association, for example through the use of particular names, objects, and stories. These can evoke the sense of being part of a tradition, drawing on memories of encounters with particular teachers and *iemoto*, like Doshin-So or Sen Rikyū. It is also one of the ways that the present generation of participants may be made to feel they have a connection with a significant cultural past. One way of establishing a link between generations is by 'taking the name' (*nateri*) of the

founder or current head of an *iemoto*. This practice is quite restricted today, but was widespread among citizens in the Edo period, many of whom used artist's names (*geimei*) to 'achieve an imaginary transformation' (Nishiyama 1997: 13). The same can be said of those individuals who have names of the *iemoto* today, although these were given to them and not 'taken'.<sup>3</sup>

In *Shorinji Kempo*, five of the original students were given names made up from the characters of the founder's name. In the absence of a practising male heir to the founder, the teachers who bear and use these names are, for practitioners, the closest living, practising connection with the tradition of the founder. One of these teachers is Mori Sensei or 'Mori-Do-Ki', after the founder, So Doshin. But this is a title never used by him and largely unknown to students at his club where I trained. For Mori Sensei, who particularly values an approach to training based on achievement and the development of skill, using this name is rather archaic and even anachronistic. Mori's authority and the respect others have for him is based, as I discussed in the previous chapter, on his personal presence rather than on the notion that he is the receptacle for reproducing the tradition of an *iemoto*. In fact, Mori's approach is presented and perceived as strikingly 'new' or at least 'different' from existing 'traditional' approaches.

In *Chadō*, one of the most evocative connections with the *iemoto* tradition is manifested in the value attached to certain materials used, like pots, cups, ladles and tea 'caddies'. Acquiring and knowing about the history of these objects has become a pastime in itself, since the late Edo period. For those *Chadō* practitioners who are aware that the materials they use are part of an artistic heritage, using them becomes a commemorative act. This is an act which evokes the tradition and even the memory of those who have previously owned and used these objects. This evocation is not the living, embodied relationship that is possible among those who refine their skills with an individual like Mori Sensei, but it is a more permanent and objective connection with the *iemoto* tradition. This is one reason why, as Catherine Guth's

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<sup>3</sup> Name taking is not uncommon in the traditional arts, although it is usually associated with schools of Japanese dance (O'Neill 1984: 637).

work (1993) has demonstrated, a close relationship has developed since the Edo period between *Chadō* and art collection.

Another, less evocative way in which *Chadō* objects can express a relationship to the *iemoto* is through the way they are used, as practical items. The practitioner who demonstrates a certain level of knowledge about how to use *Chadō* items achieves rank and status within the *iemoto* organisation. Status establishes a different connection with the *iemoto* than skill or ascription. It is an important connection. Many of the participants in *Chadō* that I practised with did not have access to famous teachers, and even when they came across valued objects were unaware of their history and significance. One of the only ways that they could express a sense of being part of the *iemoto* tradition was knowing how to use all the items in *Chadō*. The sense of tradition that may be evoked with this pragmatic understanding is powerful but vaguely defined.

The *iemoto* is most vividly recollected as a person through stories. Many teachers recount stories about the *iemoto*, and through these narratives recall certain aspects of that person. These recollections usually take place during interludes in practice, but sometimes occur outside the training environment. The common theme in all these narratives is the leader of the *iemoto*'s remarkable level of skill, that sometimes appears to reach mythical proportions. Many of those who listen are stirred and inspired by the images of what it has been possible to achieve. But outside the heroic context of these exploits, there is little sense of the *iemoto* as a person, and not as one who moreover has inherited, and will in time pass on, the tradition of his art.

For those engaged in regular practice however, it is primarily through their teacher (*sensei*), that participants come closest to the idea of the *iemoto* as a continuous living link with the past. Although there are teachers who may invoke this connection through names, objects and stories, for the most part it is their own achieved position within the hierarchy of the *iemoto* which gives them the power to dictate the time, place, and style of training, and the authority to command the respect and obedience of participants.

The term *iemoto* is in fact almost never used during normal practice. In the process of training it is by observing the hierarchical nature of the relationship between teacher and student (*'deshi'*) that participants can actively and continually affirm a connection with tradition. In all of the Zen arts, participants are organised in a vertical hierarchy according to their achieved position or 'grade'. In *Shorinji Kempo* and most of the other *Budō*, visible expressions of this hierarchy are the coloured belts (*obi*) which all participants wear as indicators of rank. In *Chadō* where there are only ever a few participants, most of whom usually know each other as individuals, status is not visible and is rarely discussed. Apart from the respect always due to the teacher, a participant's relative position during the performance of *Chadō* is usually superseded by the demands of their role as guest or host.

From their position relative to their teacher, everyone should know how to behave within the training environment. In the *iemoto* model, as in models of Japanese society, the principle of hierarchy is said to be pursued in the aim of establishing and maintaining harmonious relations. As Robert Smith comments, 'Most scholars who deal with Japanese society place at the centre of their scheme of Japanese values something usually called a sense of hierarchy' (1985: 48).

Ideally, hierarchy structures and directs any participant's efforts towards attaining the next grade and is also a guide to how to treat others and how they will treat you. Taking grading examinations, awarding and receiving certificates, have become an integral and necessary part of practice. Within the terms of the *iemoto* model, they attest to the structure and importance of the hierarchy. The grading system is a way of imposing a vertical order on practice and ensuring the continuity and homogeneity of the *iemoto* as the tradition of the Zen arts.

Substantiating and mediating the hierarchical relationship of student and teacher is the mechanism of *Giri/Ninjō* ('social obligations'/'human feelings'). This combination of obligation and feeling has been described as permeating all human

relationships in Japan, but in particular those between leader and subordinate in a group. Smith explains these concepts as follows: '*Giri* is the duty or obligation of a person to behave in certain loosely prescribed ways towards another, to whom the person is indebted. The content and scale of the duty of your obligations vary according to the relative hierarchical positions of the two parties, the nature of the debt and how it was incurred ... one's expectations must be tempered with compassion - *ninjō*. The burden on the incurrence of the obligation is the heavier of the two, for if conflict between *giri* and *ninjō* does arise it is compassion (*ninjō*) that most often gives way' (1985: 43). One example of the kind of obligations that *giri* involves is a commitment to continue as far as possible to practise regularly with the same teacher. This means that even when the circumstances of one's life change, through work or marriage, efforts should be made to continue to fit practice into these new conditions.

For two of the women at the 'Bentencho Centre for the Study of Tea' in Osaka, these conditions required them to make a lengthy, twice-weekly journey, from their marital homes in the adjacent city of Kobe. Occasionally they spoke about the demands of the journey, but never with regret or resentment. From their treatment by the other participants and particularly the teacher, it seemed as if their company was valued all the more for the efforts they made to attend. For this arrangement had another side, the warm sense of familiarity (*ninjō*), these two students expressed in returning to a place where they were well-known and had friends. The ordered environment of the training centre, including the relationship with the teacher, could be relied upon to remain predictable, even if the circumstances of their own lives continued to change.

The relationship of teacher and pupil should create a bond of personal commitment that may last a lifetime. One of my own teachers of *Shorinji Kempo*, Mahito Sasaki,<sup>4</sup> often referred to his own teacher as if their relationship were familial. On one

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<sup>4</sup> Sasaki is a teacher of *Shorinji Kempo* whom I came to know on a previous period of fieldwork conducted in Yamaguchi prefecture.

occasion when I accompanied Sasaki on a visit to his teacher in Kyōto city to deliver gifts, the difference in *giri* between duty and commitment became clear. It was explained to me by Sasaki that these gifts were not a burden, something he felt obliged to do ('*giri de wa nai*'). They were an expression of what Sasaki called '*on*' - a relationship 'like that between father and son'. Takie Sugiyama Lebra describes *on* as follows: 'the prescribed unilateral devotion and obligation in the name of reciprocity - built up on hierarchical orientations and vice versa' (1976: 251).

Sasaki later admitted that this kind of relationship was unusual among practitioners of *Shorinji Kempo* today who often viewed their arrangement with a teacher, particularly when training in a commercially run culture centre, as contractual, not personal. But in any environment, the long, intense nature of training in the Zen arts means that there is always the potential for a personal, human dimension to develop in the relationship between teacher and student. The closer we get to the lived experiences of practitioners, the less solid and secure the hereditary principle and hierarchical structures of the *iemoto* become. So where does the symbolic power of the *iemoto* to organise and motivate practitioners reside? Before the Meiji period the Zen arts were practised as relatively small scale affairs usually dominated by a single family, as in the case of *Chadō*. The source of authority for the whole organisation, sometimes with legendary status, was the leader of the *iemoto*.

If we want to understand how the *iemoto* principle has changed, it is useful to look elsewhere at organisations which are also seen as representing a link with the nation's past. There are parallels here with some aspects of the Highland clan system in Scotland. The words *iemoto* and clan both refer directly to the 'family' or its origin. As organisations, both the *iemoto* and the clan are structured into subdivisions, all of which ought to defer to the leader as the ultimate source of authority. Like the *iemoto*, the power of the clan chieftains is patriarchal<sup>5</sup> and derived from a principle of hereditary kinship, often authenticated by an official certificate, 'The power of the chief was not territorial in origin, but sprang from the belief that he was

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<sup>5</sup> Women were excluded from the chieftanship, until under a feudal system, when it became 'feasible' for women to inherit the ownership of land (Jarvie 1991: 33).



the natural leader or father of his people. In many cases the patriarchal power of the chief was consolidated by a feudal charter' (ibid 1991: 33).

It is also useful to compare how the patriarchal and personal authority of the clan has, like that of the *iemoto* been displaced. In the case of the Scottish clan, patriarchal power has become more 'tenurial and territorial' (ibid 1991: 34) and tied to ownership of land, whilst that of the *iemoto* has largely been replaced by institutions such as the culture centre and the school. In both instances, the mythic status of personal, patriarchal authority has been undermined. The implications of this comparison for our understanding of the way the *iemoto* is perceived are important. This is because the system of organisation we have today is a fusion of a mythic hereditary authority with the institutional forces of educational and commercial establishments. The *iemoto* is like the Scottish clan in one more respect, being tied in powerful and compelling ways to particular places, as well as to particular people.

If we focus on the *iemoto* as a living connection with the past, then it is in participants' relationships with their teacher that the principles of hereditary succession, hierarchy and obligation/human feeling are most immediate and significant.

In any class the teacher is the centre of attention. Practice usually does not begin until they have entered the training space, and even if the students cannot actually see the teacher during practice, they are always aware of them. It is the teacher's personal presence which sets the tone for the whole class. Not only does the teacher dictate what kind of practice should take place, but by their manner they shape the character of the class. There may be an established form for practitioners to follow, and this is particularly the case in *Chadō*, but the teacher can affect this performance by intervening (or not) so as to comment on and correct this form.

Many students of *Shorinji Kempo* entering Mori Sensei's training hall learnt to anticipate what kind of class might follow, by observing his demeanour and being

sensitive to the tone of his greeting. A typical comment between students while changing into clothes for practice might be: *Kyo wa kibishiku nai sensei wa tsukarita kara*, 'Today it will not be hard, for Mori Sensei looks tired'. When Mori Sensei was tired or preoccupied<sup>6</sup> the expectation, based on experience, was that he would not be so involved in our performances and the responsibility for amending form lay with us. Students normally expect and rely upon the presence of the teacher to provide a model of correct form and to direct their efforts in productive ways. On the rare occasions when the teacher does not appear, or is otherwise occupied, the class loses its sense of order and purpose. Most participants know what the form of a class should be, but without the aura of a teacher's presence, lack the confidence to practise on their own. It is up to the most senior students to imagine what the teacher would expect, and try to carry on as if the teacher were actually there. Very often this leads to careful imitation, since senior students copy the teacher's own manner and style of teaching.

It is possible to replace a teacher's presence by instituting a regular, disciplined regime for practice and this is what characterises *Shorinji Kempo* training in many University sports clubs. Without a teacher, however, the *iemoto* principle is no longer living and embodied in a relationship with a person and must be replaced by an attention to form and the order of practice. In a training centre like Mori Sensei's which had no consistent regime, a student's relationship with the *Shorinji Kempo* tradition relied almost completely on the presence of one person, Mori Sensei.

In normal practice, then, it is the relationship between teacher and student which substantiates as a physical reality the connection of a practitioner to the *iemoto* tradition. We have seen how there are two aspects to this relationship, so that at one level the term *sensei* indicates a structural position, but at another reflects a very personal dimension. This is why it is important not to treat the *iemoto* as only a model of/for explaining the structure and organisation of the arts, otherwise the

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<sup>6</sup> This was often the case, since he often came to practice straight after finishing work.

symbolic and personal dimensions of a practitioner's relationship are at risk of being ignored.

As a model of social organisation, the *iemoto* has long been a key feature of theories that purport to reveal the '*Heart of Japan*' (Hsu 1975). The model is a paradigmatic explanation for social behaviour, linking individuals in a variety of settings and activities as essentially and above all 'Japanese'. The reiteration of Japanese identity is not just the consequence of a reductive and categorical sociology. To understand the efficacy of the *iemoto* model, it has to be seen as part of a history of intellectual debate over the distinctive nature of Japanese society and culture vis-a-vis the foreign and modern 'Other'. The question for theorists has been: What features of Japanese culture and social organisation distinguish it from other cultures, and have persisted despite processes of modernisation? Sociological explanations have tended to focus on the *ie* or *dōzoku* ('household') as the basic underlying unit of Japanese society. In the early, but still influential, community studies of Japan: Embree (1939), Beardsley, Hall and Ward (1959), Cornell and Smith (1956), Dore (1958), Norbeck (1954) and particularly Nakane Chie (1970), the *ie* becomes a metaphor for the continuity and homogeneity of Japanese social structure.

Within the framework of these studies, Japanese society is often reduced to a few key principles of organisation like 'group', 'role' and 'hierarchy'. We have already seen how certain 'Orientalist' discourses treat Japanese culture in the same way, defined by an aesthetic vocabulary of 'key verbal concepts' (Moeran 1989) like 'heart' (*kokoro*), 'harmony' (*wa*) and 'spirit' (*seishin*).

I have argued that the Zen arts have become a key metaphor for Japanese culture and tradition because they are - within the terms of discourses like the 'discussions of Japaneseness' (*Nihonjinron*), 'Internationalism' (*kokusaika*) and Cultural Nationalism (*kokutai*), the concrete, visible manifestations of both rigid structural principles and aesthetic consciousness. These discourses approach the *iemoto* in two ways, which I have discussed above. Firstly, as a unique structure which is fixed and reproduced in all the Zen arts and their various settings. Secondly, as a symbol of

Japanese 'Tradition' which is flexible and can be expressed in different ways, for example through names, objects and stories. Both of these approaches reflect the notion of a cultural mechanism at work behind the operation of the *iemoto*.

I have been focusing on the relationship of the *iemoto* model with the Zen arts in order to investigate the association with an idea of Japanese tradition. Part of that investigation, which I will concentrate on in the rest of this chapter, asks how the *iemoto* as an order of relations is actualised and given meaning by practitioners who devolve its power and authority to themselves. Although I shall argue that it is practitioners who actualise and manifest the structures and symbols of the *iemoto*, I am not suggesting that as a result the Zen arts are constantly in inner turmoil or in a state of decline.

The aim is firstly to propose a shift in the study of the *iemoto* from a concern with structure and order to a focus on 'self' (Cohen 1994). Such a project is necessary because the linking in popular and academic discourse of a particular type of social organisation with culture has tended to reduce the individual to a reflex of a few key principles. By focusing on the self, we can see the demands of the *iemoto* not as necessarily suppressing individual desires and intentions, but certainly channelling them in certain directions and constraining their expressions in particular ways. Individual distinction is achieved on behalf of the *iemoto*, rather than one's self. This approach is a reaction against a view of Japanese society typically represented in this statement by William Caudill, 'An individual in Japan, in a profound sense, exists only in terms of a group to which he belongs and there is little separate identity apart from such groups' (Caudill 1973: 349).

Recent ethnographic studies of familial and industrial organisation, notably Dorine Kondo's '*Crafting Selves*' (1990) and Matthew Hamabata's '*Crested Kimono*' (1990), have gone a long way to restoring a sense of how individual agency is expressed in contemporary Japanese contexts. Although some commentators (Kuwayama, 1996) have dismissed the self-conscious insights of these ethnographies as 'gossip' (*sekenbanashi*), when seen 'from the viewpoint of native readers', it is

my understanding of the Zen arts that such 'gossip' reflects a significant and frequently passed-over reality for participating individuals (1996: 612).

One of the most systematic attempts to locate the *iemoto* at the centre of debates on Japanese identity is Francis Hsu's book '*Iemoto: The heart of Japan*' (1975). At the centre of Hsu's thesis is the notion of 'Kintract' out of which emerges 'Groupism'. He explains this as follows: 'A fixed and unalterable hierarchical arrangement voluntarily entered into among a group of human beings who follow a common code of behaviour under a common ideology for a common set of objectives' (1975: 62). Those who have commented specifically on the Zen arts also identify 'Groupism', 'Hierarchy' and a third feature, 'Role', as vital and persistent features of the *iemoto* (Donohue 1993). Jennifer Anderson, in '*Japanese Tea Ritual*' (1991) talks of 'shared values' and 'structural bonds' which give participants a common goal and sense of solidarity. The categorical language of these accounts is in part due to the way in which the Zen arts, unlike other spheres of life like 'household' (*ie/ dōzoku*) and the 'firm' or 'company' (*kaisha*), explicitly articulate aspects of the model that must be learnt and are continually reaffirmed at all levels of the individual's involvement.

In terms of its structural and practical aspects, the *iemoto* refers to the *sensei* ('teacher') and to a particular kind of relationship between the teacher and their students. Added to this, the Zen arts also clearly identify and acknowledge an individual's efforts to acknowledge the *iemoto* through its physical manifestation in *reigi* a 'code of moral and ethical conduct'. Literally, *reigi*, defines a participant's conduct in the training environment: how to stand and sit, forms of address to use with others, and a general emphasis on cleanliness and orderliness. Further than this, the *iemoto* is also the place where practice occurs. Although in everyday speech participants do not use the word *iemoto* as normal people use '*ie*', to refer to the family residence, the *iemoto* does have an existential dimension as a particular location in space. The shift away from treating the *iemoto* as a sociological concept towards contextualising it as an existential reality, localised in particular persons,

places and an embodied moral code, is a fundamental one. It is anticipated by Lebra's criticisms of the most ambitious attempt to use the *ie* concept as an analytical tool for understanding Japanese society - Murakami Yasunosuke, Kumon Shumpei and Satō Seizaburo's, *Bunmei to shite no ie shakai*, '*ie society as a pattern of civilisation*' (1979). According to Murakami's thesis, the *ie* has an integrative capacity subordinating local differences through characteristics like 'kintractship', borrowed directly from F. Hsu's work. In her critique, Lebra writes that 'An ie-based polity appears destined to disintegrate, and the history of the ie cycle seems more like a concatenation of mini-cycles of organizational failures than of successes ... More importantly, the ie was undermined internally by the ie principle itself. The ie organisation is effective only for a relatively small group,<sup>7</sup> ... but is inept at embracing a large jurisdiction'. 'Hence as long as the ie model was adhered to, every attempt at national unification was bound to fail' (1985: 63).

Following Lebra's critique, I intend in what follows to look at how the *iemoto* model works at a local level. In her discussion of the *iemoto* in *Chadō*, Anderson has noted that 'precise definition may depend somewhat on context: rural or urban, upper or lower class, pre Meiji or post Meiji' (1991: 78). I feel that we can go further than this, for behind the idea that the *iemoto* principle is the source of power and authority in the Zen arts, is a view of the participant as essentially constituted and defined by its structures, within which they are held. By way of redressing this balance, I will place the *iemoto* in the context of individual lives, as well as that of the specific institutions they have become a part of in the post-war period.

The popular expansion and commercialisation of the Zen arts in the post-Meiji period has increased the number and types of locations for training. At one level of understanding, what holds the training regimes in all these locations together is the *iemoto* system; reminding every practitioner of their fundamental relationship to others and to their environments. At another, 'local' level, it is powerful institutional forces which shape these contexts. The localisation of the Zen arts in particular

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<sup>7</sup> My emphasis.



places through socio-political and economic factors is not a pure determination of the operation of the *iemoto*, but each site does create constraints on the kinds of interpretations it is possible for practitioners to make about their involvement. Any practitioner is likely to move between a number of different sites in the course of their training. They may, as in the case of one *Shorinji Kempo* practitioner whom I have known, begin their training as an after-school activity using a local kindergarten, continue with an almost daily regime in a sports hall while at University, occasionally visit the headquarters at a purpose-built monastery, and end up, after graduation from University, intermittently attending a small culture centre run by a large media company, and located under a railway station.

Training at each one of these places corresponds to a different period in the life-course of this individual, Mr Hirotani. He has grown from a schoolboy to a 'company man', from a beginner to an advanced level of skill, achieving captaincy of his University club and now a senior member at the culture centre. Each time and place has brought a different responsibility and a different manifestation of the *iemoto* system. The particular demands and expectations of being part of a University club are not the same as those in a culture centre, although in both situations it is technically the *iemoto* system which is held to be the organising principle. I shall argue that the experience of Mr Hirotani is typical, and any participant's understanding of the *iemoto* system cannot simply be defined by a set of abstract principles, but has to be remade in particular times and spaces. As such, the *iemoto* is not only a kinship structure, but also an organising paradigm for locating individuals in space and time. Its meaning is not uniform for all, and is continually changing.

There are, however, also broad consistencies which underlie these changes marking the space in question as a training site. All sites for training in the Zen arts are shaped as such in the consciousness of practitioners by a pair of relational terms: *Uchi/Soto*, literally 'inside' and 'outside'. *Uchi* is not a term specific to the Zen arts and is usually used to refer to the local, present generation of the *ie* or 'family' group, while *soto* denotes all those who inhabit the space outside, i.e. non-kin. If we

apply the distinctions made by these relational terms to the organisation of the Zen arts, *uchi* refers to the community of members at any training site, who continually create and re-create a network of relations by their active participation. *Soto* distinguishes this community from all those who either do not participate or else practise somewhere else.

For the Zen arts, then, *uchi* has two meanings. First, to establish the sense of a group bound together by their collective participation at one time and place, and secondly to mark differences with the outside, particularly non-participants, but also those who practise elsewhere. The relationship that these terms *uchi* and *soto* imply is not a fixed social framework, but a wide series of contextual relationships that locate possible meanings in space and time. Or as Jane Bachnik puts it, 'Rather than an organizational box defined by form, or structure, *uchi* and *uchi/soto* define strong two-way links between inside members and the socio-economic world outside the *ie* that have considerable implications for household organization' (1994: 144). The implications for the *iemoto* of this 'two-way link' is that the social organisation of any group of practitioners is in some measure defined by the particularities of the site where they practise.

Distinguishing the *iemoto* as a system of rules and principles from *uchi*, the practical grounded reality of practice, represents a significant rethinking of the subject. The distinction is between the *iemoto* as an 'entire time/space trajectory' (ibid 1994: 145) or Tradition, and the *uchi*, who are the present, active members of a training site.

There is a useful term, *Deixis*, which Bachnik employs to describe this process of locating the *ie* (or *iemoto*) as *uchi*.<sup>8</sup> '*Deixis* is a major aspect of *ie* organisation, providing an ongoing dynamic in which human beings located in space/time mutually interact with the social order continuing over time so that each constitutes

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<sup>8</sup> *Deixis* derives from the Greek word *deiknum* meaning 'to point' or 'to indicate' and is defined in Bachnik and Quinn (1994) by J. Lyons as 'the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it' (Quoted in Bachnik and Quinn 1994: 26).

the other in an ongoing way'. In the anthropological study of Japan, this is what is meant by referring to context as the organising principle for social life and the 'self' as 'situationally defined' (Lebra 1970). We are not talking here of situational selves, in the sense that behaviour is determined by context, but rather drawing attention to the capacities of different contexts for certain kinds of signification. In other words, when the *iemoto* is located in practice, not all contexts have the same capacity to authoritatively represent the network of relations as does the *iemoto* tradition. Contemporary practice of the Zen arts involves negotiating an ever-increasing number and type of facility, but the specific terms used by participants to refer to a training site in the Zen arts imply that these are all places where the *iemoto* system is equally manifested. The terms *dōjō*, for training in a martial way', and *chashitsu*, for *Chadō*, mean more than just a place for training; like the *iemoto*, they are terms laden with culturally specific value.

A *dōjō* is literally a 'place' (*jō*) for regimes of training in the 'way' (*dō*) that are practical, not contemplative. In this respect, they are different from the meditative practices which take place in Zen temples (Davis 1980: 1). *Dōjō* developed out of the private *Bugei* (another term for martial ways) academies of the seventeenth century, where unemployed Samurai gained employment by teaching martial skills. This was the first time that sites for training had been fixed and was part of a general formalization and systemization of the arts (Friday 1997: 53). The association with martial training continues today when *dōjō* is usually taken as a place for learning the martial ways. An interesting antecedent of the word *dōjō*, by which early training sites were known, is *keikoba*, which translates as 'practice place' or more literally a 'place for reflecting on the past' (ibid: 54). Although this term has fallen out of use since the Meiji period, there is, as I shall illustrate shortly, a continuing preoccupation with these spaces as places where the past can be made present.

Just such a place is the headquarters of *Shorinji kempo*, a purpose-built temple complex overlooking the small fishing town of Tadotsu on the island of Shikoku. To reach the temple takes about one and a half hours by train from the city of

Okayama, which is how students usually arrive. They are able to see the temple and particularly its tall Chinese style pagoda from the train windows for some time before they arrive. It is an impressive sight, the biggest privately owned facility for *Budō* training in the world.

Construction of the temple began in the 1950s (and took over twenty years to complete) with the aim of re-creating as far as was possible the environment of the Shaolin temple of China. The Shaolin temple is held to be the place where the Indian sage Bodhidharma developed a series of exercises with martial applications, so that the monks could meditate better and defend themselves if necessary. In the popular imagination (fuelled regularly by movies, 'comics' (*manga*), and television programmes), the Shaolin temple is credited with being the spiritual home of all the martial ways. *Shorinji Kempo* claims a direct link with the Shaolin temple through its founder, Doshin So, who is said to have practised there in the 1930s and 1940s as a disciple of the head monk, and eventually to have succeeded him as the next headmaster. There are some doubts and plenty of debate about the facts of his account, but it is clear that the temple in Shikoku draws explicitly on Chinese themes in its construction.

The architecture, objects, and imagery of the Shikoku temple can be divided into two main themes: Buddhist and Chinese. A powerful sense of a distinctive tradition has been constructed out of these influences. It is a tradition presented as a visual mode or style, making it possible for practitioners to define an identity for the activity and for themselves by being present. Potentially, it binds them together with other practitioners, and differentiates them from those who do not participate or who participate somewhere else.

Above the main entrance to the temple is a large *manji* (a reversed 'swastika'), the same symbol which marks Buddhist temples everywhere in Japan. The impression on entering a temple is even more explicit inside the entrance where one is confronted by two large *Nyoi*, fierce Buddhist guardian figures which protect and mark the boundaries of a temple. Behind these figures is the forecourt, a flat, grassy

area, little used except during public events and festivals. A statue of Doshin So dominates the rear half of the space, and to the right side of the entrance are small discreet grave-markers recording the burial of famous and important teachers. This is a space which evokes the past not only in the general sense of a temple, but also specifically through the memory of certain individuals. At the far end of the forecourt are the headquarter's offices, reached by a small stairway that is flanked by a pair of statues of Chinese lions. Above the office on the first floor is the original and main *dōjō*.

There are three *dōjō* in all, each one large enough to accommodate at least two hundred people. This kind of monumental scale is quite unlike the normal training facilities practitioners are used to. At the head of each *dōjō*, between two large *manji* (a reversed 'swastika') symbols is a raised platform, arranged as if it were part of a Buddhist temple. There is a heavy, ornate table on which stand flowers and candles which in Buddhist cosmology are used to represent love (flowers) and wisdom (light), respectively. Beside the table, on a stand of its own, is a drum (*taiko*), used as in Buddhist ceremonies to mark the beginning and end of practice. In the centre of the table is a statuette of Bodhidharma, and off to one side a large portrait of Doshin So.

These objects sacralise and personalise the space of the *dōjō*. During training, the practitioner faces toward the platform, and only has to look up at the portrait of Doshin So or the statuette of Bodhidharma to be reminded of their *iemoto* and their involvement in its tradition. The deliberate use of religious objects and iconography separates the space from the outside world and links it to powerful ideas about *shugyō*, *Seishin kyōiku* ('spiritual training'), and specifically to the ideals of the Shaolin monastery.

This perceived connection with China's cultural/martial heritage is marked visually in several ways, although it should be noted that in terms of the technical system it has been argued (Draeger 1974) that there is no proper relation at all between

*Shorinji Kempo* and what is or was practised at the Shaolin temple. Nevertheless, to evoke such a tradition is to create an important connection with a long cultural history of borrowing and adapting Chinese religious beliefs and practices. The most significant item in this respect is the Shaolin temple wall painting, which is reproduced in the Shikoku temple. The painting is thought to depict Chinese and Indian monks practising fighting techniques together for spiritual edification. Doshin So was convinced of this, and has written about the painting and his desire to re-create its lifestyle, as the main inspiration for constructing the Shikoku temple.

The reproduction of the Shaolin wall painting is kept in a large pagoda, the tallest building in the Tadotsu temple complex, which also functions as a museum of *Shorinji Kempo* history. The museum uses objects, diagrams and photographs to detail the life of Doshin So and the organisation which he founded. It is an illustration and a reminder to students of their place within an ordered hierarchy that extends back over time and across space.

In such surroundings, where the authority of the *iemoto* tradition is constantly invoked, it is not difficult to be inspired and enchanted. For those individuals who are, there is an 'academy' (*busen*) at the temple, where like the Shaolin monks, they too may devote themselves to full-time practice, over a period of one or two years. However, for most other practitioners who train in smaller, less elaborate urban environments, where there are few if any of the accoutrements of the Shikoku temple, the idea of a *dōjō*, the sense of belonging to a distinct, ordered group and of being separate and different from others is harder to sustain. There are, of course, other factors, besides the space of the *dōjō*, like the personal presence of the *sensei*, and as we shall see later, the attention paid to a 'code of conduct' (*reigi*); but without the space and icons of a furnished *dōjō*, much of the sense of being part of a tradition is absent. It is partly for this reason that so many famous *dōjō* are located in or near Buddhist temples, where religious iconography is already in place. It is also the case that some instructors of *Shorinji Kempo* are Buddhist priests themselves, or on familiar terms with them. The historical record does not clearly



distinguish *dōjō* and 'temple' (*otera*), and there are different opinions on this issue (see Davis 1980: 1; Friday 1997: 198). The situation today is also confused, and it is only limitations of size and the lack of facilities in many temples which prevent practice taking place within them.

The most famous private *Shorinji Kempo dōjō* in Japan is a converted annexe to a *Jōdo Shū* Buddhist temple in the city of Kyoto. Known as *Rakutō dōjō* after the temple and the area in which it is located, the instructor here is also the priest of the temple. This *dōjō* shares many of the visual features I described from the Shikoku temple, and has a reputation among practitioners for being one of the most 'traditional' (*dentō tekina*) places to train. This means a number of things: that the *dōjō* has a famous and charismatic teacher, who in the manner of the *iemoto* system has passed on much of his responsibility for teaching to his two sons. Covering the walls of the *dōjō* are the certificates and pictures of previous students at the temple, now teachers in their own right. More so than at the Shikoku temple, where most students are only there for a short visit, there is a sense of continuity at *Rakutō*, personalised in the photographs and certificates on the walls. Unlike the main temple, *Rakutō dōjō* does not function as a headquarters for the organisation, but combines the surroundings of an old Buddhist temple with a much more coherent *uchi* (here meaning 'inside' or 'group') identity.

The *dōjō* is a space of and for the imagination, and at the *Rakutō* and Shikoku temples an imagined space has become a place that is put into practice, a place of distinction. This is one reason why *Rakutō* has always had a strong attraction for foreigners who literally buy into a version of tradition. It is also popular among students at the nearby Buddhist seminaries, who combine their practice of *Shorinji Kempo* with their studies.

The idea of principles of the *iemoto* organisation as naturally existing in particular places is even stronger and more distinctive in the case of the tea room (*chashitsu*). Daisetsu Suzuki says of the tea room, that it is 'symbolic of certain aspects of

Eastern culture, especially of Japanese culture. In it we find in a most strongly and deeply concentrated form almost all the elements that go to make up what is characteristic of the Japanese mind statically viewed. As to its dynamic aspects, there are only a few signs betokening them in the tea room; where even movements are so controlled as to add to the quietude generally prevailing here' (quoted in Suzuki 1959: 298-299).

Suzuki seems to suggest that the tea room is a 'controlled' environment for practitioners because of certain properties of its design. He posits a correspondence between the form and layout of the tea room and elements characteristic of the Japanese mind. How might the construction of the tea room impose such a cognitive framework upon participants so that the *iemoto* principles are consistently manifested in space? Among the participants in *Chadō* that I have interviewed, most have a general awareness that the location and layout of the tea room is extremely detailed, historically significant, and has been influential in Japanese design and aesthetics. But very few participants have a detailed knowledge of the symbolism behind the particular layout of a tea house. Like *Shorinji Kempo* participation in *dōjō*, what they know is how this space should be used, and that it can be appreciated as a distinct and ordered space connected to a cultural tradition.

Opportunities for the full expression of this kind of appreciation are few, but the annual gathering of the *Urasenke* school of *Chadō* at an old *Rinzai* Zen temple in Kyōto, re-creates as near as it is possible today, a certain kind of situation where *Chadō* used to be taken, in the past. On the occasion that I attended this event, over three hundred participants were assembled, divided up into groups of five people. More than this number would not have been able to fit comfortably into the tea room.

It took the best part of the day to complete the whole event. Participants sat on the floor in groups, shuffled forward on command to the next part of the temple, met and paid respects to the head of the *iemoto*, then ate the special meal (*kaiseki ryōri*,

which may accompany tea), before finally receiving tea in the tea room from one of the senior *Chadō* teachers. The whole event was so highly organised that when eventually the group I had joined for this day came to the tea house, the demands of being a guest seemed like a natural extension of the discipline we had been observing all day.

The tea house was located in the corner of a small garden and reached via a narrow pathway of slightly raised stone blocks. Everybody in our group agreed it was an 'old' (*furui*) and 'beautiful' (*Kireina/utsukushii*) tea house, but could add to these comments no specific details about the design. To know that this was a special and ordered environment and to allow oneself to be disciplined by it, an expert knowledge of the tea room was unnecessary.

The size of a tea room varies, but the classic and standard form is a precisely measured four and a half mat area called the *yōjōhan*. It is a small space, but highly ordered and symbolically significant, synthesizing 'spatial elements of Buddhist, Taoist and native Japanese cosmological models' (Anderson 1991: 57). This model divides the four and a half mat room into nine equal segments. There is one central segment and the eight peripheral segments are associated with a direction, an attribute (wind/water, etc.) and a virtue (strength/pleasure etc.). But even for those participants who do not know all this, the layout of the room, the objects within it, and the way they are treated, affirm the sense of a well-defined order.

The performance of *Chadō* is also ordered, not only to express forms of aesthetic quality, but also a particular network of relationships between all those assembled. This network is, in mystical terms, the 'intuitive unity of consciousness' which I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. More mundanely, but no less significantly, it is the feeling among participants of a temporary suspension of normal social relations and of being a member of a particular *uchi* group.

In *dōjō* and *chashitsu*, we are looking at the self-conscious construction of a space for the *iemoto* defined through an attention to order, the iconography of the past, and the memory of particular individuals. But at the same time it is important to recognise that there also needs to be an acknowledgement of the relation between the *iemoto* and matrices of power. The danger of interpreting *dōjō* and *chashitsu* only in terms of their religious, cosmological meanings is that they may appear immutable and naturally occurring. The process we saw in *Shorinji Kempo* of the construction of an identity through the deliberate selection of icons and symbols demonstrates that such meanings have to be made.

In most training sites today, icons and symbols of the *iemoto* tradition have to be reconstructed in the imagination of participants or replaced, by focusing on the *sensei* or on an attention to 'etiquette', (*reigi*). Normally, training sites are spaces like sports halls and culture centres that are used for practising the Zen arts only at particular times. In the case of tea houses, they are often used by more than one group, and are located in urban environments such as a block of flats or inside a private home. Increasingly over the period since the Meiji restoration, *dōjō* and *chashitsu* that are distinct and separate spaces from the world outside have been the exception rather than the norm. This is a consequence of the arts being caught up in broad social and political movements and the emergence of culture centres and educational facilities as alternative venues for practice. They have transformed the way the *iemoto* system operates today.

After the Meiji restoration, the government became involved for the first time in the organisation of the arts, as their main benefactor. State promotion of the arts led to the designation of official styles of architecture, and later in the nationalist period that preceded the Pacific War, to the establishment of an official 'national culture' (*Kokutai*).

These political processes coincided with a growing awareness of, and demand for, the arts among the urban populace, generated by a vigorous economy and the

development of the modern market system in the Taishō era (1912-1926). The emergence of mass cultural institutions such as department stores brought significant changes in the organisation and support for the arts. The arts began to be regarded as an item of mass culture, something that may be possessed by achievement and certification within an hierarchical system, rather than a matter of skill: 'People began to regard a work of art as an object and separate from the act of creating it, something to be bought, valued and displayed' (Havens 1982: 30).

These changes in the organisation of the arts came together in the post-war period when after a period of extraordinary economic growth (1970s and 80s). 'Culture' (*Bunka*), became a keyword in political, intellectual and even popular circles (ibid: 25). Two organisations were set up to promote these interests, the Cultural agency of the Education ministry in 1968 and the Japan Foundation in 1972. These aimed to preserve and promote a sense of national identity through cultural pursuits like the arts.

In the 1960s and 1970s, with both state and private patronage, there was a huge growth in the construction of the 'culture' (*karucha/Bunka*) industries; using the term loosely to include for example, the building of new theatres and concert halls. At the local level, the number of prefectures with cultural programmes rose from eight in 1968, to be all-inclusive in 1976. In 1977, an official comment spoke of 'an unprecedented rise in public expectations of the arts' (ibid: 25). Large sums of money were now being invested in the arts, and although in 1980 the Agency for Cultural Affairs devoted forty percent of its total budget of two hundred million dollars to the arts, the bulk of funding came from the private sector.

The arts have always been overwhelmingly dependent on private and commercial support. Before and after the Meiji restoration, artists relied on the patronage of wealthy merchants and samurai as benefactors. The emergence of culture centres about twenty years ago, while encouraged and partly funded by state institutions, could not have been sustained without commercial backing. Large commercial institutions such as department stores, railway companies, and particularly media

corporations like NHK and Yomiuri, recognised and responded to a burgeoning middle class with time and money to spend on what was being called 'leisure' (*reja*). We have to be careful how we understand a term like 'leisure' which as *reja* in the Japanese context has a specific range of meaning and fundamentally is not opposed to work. It came into use in the 1960s and has a 'sense of 'luxury' and an aspect of 'active use' (Linhart 1984: 210-211).

The so-called *reja* (as 'leisure') boom began at the beginning of the 1960s, and was so important that there was official recognition for it as a major goal in life by the establishment in 1972 of the Office for the Development of the leisure Industry. The development of culture centres during the period of the leisure boom in the 1970s and early 1980s brought unprecedented levels of involvement in the arts. Culture centres so fundamentally changed the way instruction was organised in the arts that the *iemoto* should now be defined institutionally, as part of a commercial enterprise (Moriya 1984: 108). Post-war, middle-class engagement with the arts had already converted the *iemoto* into a national institution. As a concern of the Education Ministry, the *iemoto* system had become much more respectable (even being described in quasi-spiritual terms as part of *shugyō*) than it had ever been in the pleasure quarters of nobles and merchants in the Edo period. Now under the auspices of commercial enterprises, the ethos, operation and ethics of the *iemoto* system changed. The rigid hierarchical social structure and exclusivity of the *iemoto* system relaxed. Schools of the arts became less restrictive and more popular and available. Convenience, cost, and the ease of access to those sections of the population who had the time and money to attend, were important criteria for their operation. Today, the *iemoto* is not only located in *dōjō* and *chashitsu*, but institutional environments like schools and culture centres.

In fact, the notion of training in the arts being part of a commercial enterprise has a longer history than culture centres, and goes back to the introduction of *depāto*, ('Department Stores') in the Late Edo period and their subsequent popularity in the Meiji and Taisho periods. Department stores were and still are centrally important institutions in urban centres for the selection and preservation of 'Culture' (*bunka*)



for the general populace. They promoted the exhibition, demonstration, and learning of the arts. Although in terms of active public involvement they have been replaced by culture centres today, there remains a link in popular perceptions between commercial institutions and the display and performance of High Cultural pursuits like the Zen arts.

The organisational changes which commercialism brought to the *iemoto* system in the post-war period did not go unheeded and provoked passionate acts of protest. In February 1980, the dancer Hanayagi Genshū made a shockingly violent protest against the changes to the *iemoto* system for her school of classical Japanese dance. On stage, she attacked Hanayagi Genshū, the head of a powerful school, stabbing and wounding her (Havens 1982: 244). Her protest was followed nine months later by an attack on the works of leading Japanese artists by a Tokyo artist, Yamashita Kaname.

These incidents provoked debate at the time about the state of the arts in Japan, but no changes to the ongoing processes of commercialisation. The arts may have been freed from their ties to special places and become more accessible to people, but in doing so the sense of an ordered, bounded *uchi* group was diminished, and the principles of the *iemoto* diluted. For, as Moriya remarks, there is a sense in which ‘students at culture centres are “buying” the certificates attesting to their progress in various aesthetic pursuits’ (Moriya 1984: 109). Moriya also talks about ‘pseudo-*iemoto*’ groups, by which he means organisations that are variously called ‘associations’ (*kyōkai*), ‘academies’ (*gakkai*) and ‘schools’ (*gakkō*) (1984: 109). These organisations may model themselves on the *iemoto* system, but in the absence of the head of the *iemoto*, or *sensei*, they rely on the prestige of the culture centre to which they are attached, the size of their membership and the ability to award certificates in order to attract students. In my own fieldwork in the city of Kyōto, I came across just this kind of arrangement, where *kimono* manufacturers sponsored *Chadō* groups in order to promote their own products.

Culture centres are potentially extremely profitable enterprises and many would argue that they have changed the ethics of the *iemoto* system. In January 1981, Ikenobo Sen'ei, *iemoto* of Japan's largest *Ikebana* school was discovered with a safe containing 600,000 dollars, evidence of tax evasion on a huge scale. But scandals like this have not seriously deterred students, who are prepared to pay large fees for the privilege of receiving instruction and getting certificates. Women in particular have time, money and the desire to do cultural pursuits like the Zen arts. The element of desire is important, for although it has been argued that Japanese society today is essentially middle class, I will show in the next chapter that there is social stratification, grounded in the desire for distinction from others. One way that this is possible, based on the notion of culture centres as sites for the possession or 'consumption' of culture, is by learning and achieving a certain level of skill in one of the Zen arts.

Certificates of achievement in the Zen arts have considerable social and vocational value. Training regimes, particularly in culture centres, are organised with regular examinations and taught so as to give students the best opportunity for advancement. Those students who wish to take an examination are often given the personal attention of their seniors. They practise only what needs to be known in order to achieve the next grade. The efforts of the successful examinee are well rewarded. A young woman with a certificate in *Chadō* is able to use it to contribute towards making a good marriage. The certificate is proof to a prospective husband and his parents that this woman is accomplished in the formal etiquette (*reigi sahō*) learnt in *Chadō* and necessary to take part in polite society.

One ex-student of the martial way, *Karate-dō* ('way of the empty hand') that I have interviewed, now holds a senior position in the Japanese foreign service. He attributed his success in persuading the interview panel for this job to providing evidence of his certification and even an impromptu demonstration of his *karate* skills. He had been asked what his 'hobby' (*shumi*) had been at University. The combination of achieving a high rank in a valued activity like *karate* coupled with a

performance, persuaded the interview panel that here was a candidate with ‘spirit’ (*seishin*) and ‘heart’ (*kokoro*). Besides being useful for impressing prospective husbands and employers, the orientation towards certification also adds to the prosperity of the organisation which must be paid in order for a candidate to achieve grade, and to the prestige of the training site from where the student comes. The orientation towards training and paying for achievement is an indication that the *iemoto* system is part of a commercial enterprise, which now relies on the revenue from consistently high levels of participation in order to perpetuate itself.

Culture centres and the *iemoto* depend on each other to provide the means necessary to continue to prosper; as Moriya puts it, they are ‘clearly in a mutually beneficial relationship’ (1984: 108). The merging of the principles of the *iemoto* with the institutional arrangements of commercial and educational enterprises has transformed the ways in which practitioners perceive their engagement with the Zen arts. Within the terms of politically motivated discourses on national culture, the Zen arts are still distinct from the sports that schoolchildren and university students play, and the leisure pursuits in which many women take part. Those who practise the Zen arts can claim to be studying an art that is also a spiritual pursuit (*shugyō*). The places where such training takes place are ideally spaces like the *chashitsu*, for learning correct manners and etiquette, and *dōjō*, where a practitioner can build ‘character’ or ‘spirit’ (*kokoro/seishin*).

But when the Zen arts are approached by participants as a practical concern, as an activity which must be accommodated into everyday urban life, then there are more mundane issues at stake, such as cost and convenience. Cost, for example, is also an important criterion for the practitioner in deciding where to train, what activity to train in, and indeed whether or not to train at all. Most practitioners choose for convenience’s sake to practise somewhere close to home or work, or else easily accessible by transport. At the *Culdy Sentā*, ‘Culdy centre’ for ‘Culture and Sports’ on Port Island, a man-made island connected to the city of Kobe where I practised *Shorinji Kempo*; training began late enough to allow children to come after school,

and finished early enough so that the adult members could catch the last train home. The facilities at this culture centre were functional but particularly basic - a small office, two classrooms, and two small activity rooms. The location of the centre was just as unremarkable - the second floor of a small, nondescript, modern shopping precinct, between a noodle restaurant and a swimming pool. But the low cost of classes and easy access to public transport made this a popular site for residents living nearby on the island, as well as those in neighbouring Kobe city. Conveniences like these are particularly important to today's urban Japanese in making decisions about their 'lifestyle' (*seikatsu*). 'Convenience' (*benrina koto*) is a term that keeps reappearing in the literature which advertises culture centres. Culture centres need to be 'convenient' if they are to fit into the *modān seikatsu* or 'modern lifestyle' of an urbanite, alongside supermarkets, department stores and banks. This is one reason why culture centres are essentially an urban phenomenon, located in or near train stations and department stores and easily accessible. The importance of 'convenience' has filtered down into privately owned facilities like the one at Bentenchō in Osaka which I mentioned earlier. Here, the teacher of *Chadō* makes a point of telling new students just how easy it is to reach the facility by public transport. There was even one tea room which I visited, which was located on the top floor of a luxury apartment block in the centre of Osaka city. This room was for the use of any of the building's residents, whether or not they were part of a *Chadō* group or knew how to practise *Chadō*. Apparently, it was a space predominantly used for casual social gatherings and entertaining guests. The location and use of spaces like the culture centres I have mentioned reflects the concern of the institution, and increasingly of the students as well, to make practice 'convenient', another 'lifestyle' choice. Treating the training site in this way is opposed to the ideal of the *dōjō* and the *chashitsu*, which should not be used for any other purpose but the art, and in time become places which resonate with memories of all those who have practised in the past. They should be places apart from the outside world, spaces with a distinct identity that students make an effort to come to terms with.

Many of those with whom I practised did make tremendous efforts to attend particular places, even if they were far away and inconvenient. I have already mentioned the women who practised *Chadō* at Bentenchō and continued to train even when they were married and living elsewhere. One student of *Shorinji Kempo*, Mr Fujimoto, whom I practised with at the Port Island Culdy centre over a two year period, made a two and a half hour journey every Friday evening so that he could learn from Mori Sensei. It was an effort which Mori acknowledged and commented upon, often making time so that Fujimoto could ask his own questions about techniques. Not only were there students like Fujimoto who made special efforts to practise with particular teachers because of their reputation or an existing relationship, but there were others who were drawn to particular places by their picturesque qualities.

*Dōjō* and *chashitsu* can be distinguished from one another in the ways they use space to articulate the *iemoto* system as a distinct *uchi* group of the arts. With culture centres, this kind of distinction is not possible, and they are distinguished one from another by reference to criteria like 'convenience' and cost. This is why some have called the transformation of the *iemoto* system in culture centres a distortion of its principles.

Culture centres now have prestige in their own right, as commercial institutions as well as for the particular teachers and activities within them. As one teacher of *Chadō* at a culture centre organised and sponsored by a newspaper group, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, put it to me: 'The kind of woman who comes here is the kind of woman who shops at a department store, not a supermarket.'

There were no such pretensions at the Culdy centre on Port Island which, with the exception of Mori *sensei*, was not able to attract famous teachers, and did not have the facilities to offer prestigious activities like *Chadō*. The Culdy centre operated more as a 'community centre' (*kominkan*) or 'cram school' (*juku*) for the local

neighbourhood. Had there been a traditional style *dōjō* or *chashitsu* in the Cudly centre, the membership and use of it would have been quite different.

The *Shorinji Kempo* classes conducted by Mori Sensei reflected the location of the centre, combining the *iemoto* system with educational principles and a sensitivity to the local community. Mori's class was very popular with local schoolchildren, and in the time that I was there he taught a large class of fifty students, ranging from ages five to sixteen. Their parents often came to watch and some, like Mr Ohara and his wife, had even taken up *Shorinji Kempo* because of their children's involvement. With very few adults attending, the club revolved around these children and relied upon active parents like Mr Ohara to do much of the organisation. The adult members and parents particularly admired the way that Mori taught *Shorinji Kempo* as part of the children's general education and as something that was fun. This might have seemed ignominious in a traditional *dōjō*, surrounded by religious icons and the photographs of previous and famous teachers. In fact, it was the absence of those kinds of surroundings which led to there being so few adult students attending, for unlike the children they were generally not prepared to treat the space as an extension of their education.

Classes began with the children assembled in lines saluting (*gasshō-rei*) first the *manji*, hung temporarily in the form of a scroll on one wall, and then their teacher, Mori. After a brief warm-up and some basic routines, the class split into groups by grade to practise techniques. So far, the hierarchical authority of the teacher and the ordering of the *dōjō* space had been absolutely respected. But after forty five minutes, about one third of the way through the class, Mori halted the students and called for a *Kyūkei*, 'rest period'. At this point the children generally ran riot, playing impromptu games with each other, and climbing all over their teacher and the other adults supervising them. The noise was tremendous, and the room was filled with chaotic activity, but nobody intervened because, as Mori explained, this is their 'play-time' (*purei-time*), something which he said, they generally do not get the opportunity for at school once they have outgrown kindergarten.



After about five or ten minutes, the class is called back together again and continues as before with disciplined practice. Just before the end of the session, which usually lasts two hours, Mori stops the class once again. He seats all the children on the floor, in rows facing a space in the centre of the room. The students are called out individually or in pairs to perform the techniques they have been learning that session in front of the class. The objective is for them to overcome their embarrassment at being singled out and to develop what Mori describes as 'confidence' (*jishin*). It is a practice sometimes seen at other training sites, but is one of the aspects of Mori's class which most impresses the children's parents. There is a widely held perception among practitioners of the Zen arts like Mori, that children should be taught so as to cultivate aspects of character which are not paid attention to in schools.

One local school teacher, Watanabe-san from a nearby school was so moved by Mori's method of teaching that he took up training himself. He explained to me that training in the Zen arts was often approached systematically like learning in schools. Students became accustomed to acting within very disciplined structures, but were not confident in themselves outside of these structures. In universities especially, the *iemoto* system was interpreted so rigidly that often it was only the authority of the university club's hierarchy which was realised through practice, rather than the nature of the movement or the 'character' or 'heart' (*kokoro*) of the individual.

Mori's class was different in this respect, and aimed to improve upon the education children received at school and what he saw as lacking in their over-reliance on systematic teaching methods. At the Culdy centre, as at each of the sites we have looked at there is a different capacity for the signification of the principles of the *iemoto*. Culture centres are the clearest example of the process of merging the *iemoto* with *modān seikatsu*, 'modern lifestyle', leisure and principles of education.

As the *iemoto* system has been made to adapt to the changing circumstances of modern Japanese urban lifestyles, training sites have become more various. It has

been argued that the diversity of institutions where the Zen arts are practised reinforces the sense of there being a coherent model linking them all together in 'symbiotic relations' (Rohlen 1997: 12). What I have aimed to do is describe the variability as well as the coherence of the *iemoto* in specific contexts. For as we have seen at the Cudly centre, in some ways the institutional forces of Leisure and Education reinforce each other, and in some ways they contradict each other and the principles of the *iemoto*.

The idea of the *iemoto* system as fixed in space as *uchi*, *dōjō* or *chashitsu* has been persuasive to interpreters, and indeed to some practitioners, because it is part of a more general notion that cultures can be rooted in space and time (Hastrup & Olwig 1996; Gupta & Ferguson 1997). With regard to places like Japan where there are powerful political discourses which make very similar assumptions about culture, this has led to a tendency to conceptualise items of Japanese culture like the Zen arts as being in harmony with the natural world. This is an idea most comprehensively expressed in Zen gardens, where many tea houses are located.

We saw earlier the problem with this kind of approach, which evaluated the practical experience of performance of the Zen arts in terms of an aesthetic world of abstraction. When the Zen arts are represented textually as an aesthetic vocabulary, they occupy an abstract space, they are not grounded in the experience of practitioners, or localised in time and space. Like the aesthetic code, the *iemoto* system cannot be evaluated in terms of abstract principles, independently of context and the human encounter. It needs to be seen as part of a living social community. To do otherwise, is to deny agency to the individuals being examined, and also to deny the changes in the number and types of places where training now occurs.

This is why it has been necessary to examine the cultural importance of place and space in the Zen arts, while avoiding as much as possible reproducing an absolute distinction between *uchi* and *soto*, place and non-place. My point of departure has been the various ways by which the *iemoto* may be represented in the perceptions of those who practise the Zen arts. These perceptions are not all in agreement with

each other, and are partly reflections of the kinds of places where today's practitioners train. But we must be cautious about this kind of deconstructive analysis of the *iemoto*. Just at the point when we are looking at the fragmentation of local practices and the constructed nature of the idea of the *iemoto*, Japanese participants are themselves reaffirming the existence of, and their relationship to, an *iemoto*.

My point has been that the differences between practising at a *dōjō/chashitsu* and a culture centre can be just as significant for a participant's perception of the *iemoto* system, as are the similarities they perceive amongst each other by all being members of the same organisation.

When treated as an icon for the Zen arts or indeed for Japanese culture, the *iemoto* remains untouched by history or agency, but relies on the idea of culture as place. The problem with this is as Olwig and Hastrup have stated in a recent collection titled 'Siting Culture', that 'With the loss of place as a dominant metaphor of culture goes a methodological redirection from order to non order' (1997: 7). The shift is away from the idea of culture as a naturally ordered space, to one that has to be continually reconstructed and reaffirmed in practice. Here, I have tried to address this issue by focusing on the politico-economic processes of place-making, but I want to show in the next section how the reality of the *iemoto* system is defined for most participants in the practice of an embodied 'moral and ethical code' (*reigi*). Even within *dōjō*, and especially in less picturesque locations like culture centres, it is through the embodiment of this code that the *iemoto* is reaffirmed (rather than by pre-established social situations or the fixed co-ordinates of a semantic space). For as De Certeau says, fundamentally 'Space is a practised place' (1986: 117).

## Chapter 6

### Distinguishing Persons - The Code of and for Becoming a Practitioner

Unlike a *dōjō* or *chashitsu*, the *iemoto* cannot be fixed in time and space, since it is continually having to be remade in a variety of contexts, largely through the efforts of an accomplished teacher (*sensei*).

One of the ways in which a *sensei* can make any training space a *dōjō* and manifest the hierarchical principles of the *iemoto* directly and concretely to participants, is through a moral and ethical code of conduct referred to as *reigi/kei* (lit. 'respect'). The emphasis in this code is on physical and verbal expressions of 'respect' for the hierarchy of the group and one's position within it. Literally, this code describes how practitioners should behave towards and address one another in the training environment. A student who conducts himself in accordance with this code conveys a willingness to be guided by the social ideals of the *iemoto*. Like the *sensei* and place (*dōjō/chashitsu*) for training, *reigi/kei* are indicative of the power and authority of the *iemoto* over participants.

They also indicate a much wider commitment, in Japanese society at large, to the value of codifying and learning good manners and social etiquette. For when understood in its broadest sense as an idiom of politeness and sociability, *reigi/kei* is not peculiar to the Zen arts, but links together the expectations of authorities in most educational and working environments. Two anthropological studies (Rohlen 1974; Kondo 1990) detail how practices taken from Zen, like meditation and mountain-walking, have been borrowed by specialised 'spirit training groups' (*seishin kyōiku*), to train school students and company employees the proper forms for social interaction. The logic behind the attention paid to particular forms of sociality is that it is not possible to carry out any productive work without them.

This chapter will add to that literature by investigating the manner in which the practice of the Zen arts expresses an appreciation of the values of sociality. These values are more than an index of the power and authority of the *iemoto*, since they reflect the social life of the Zen arts. That is, firstly, the way in which proper conduct can be as important as technical mastery because it is held to exhibit directly and articulate the mental attitude necessary for a good performance. The theory is that achieving a performance of aesthetic quality is only possible within a certain structure of relations. There is a parallel between the way the Zen arts should be organised according to *reigi/kei*, and the aesthetic ideal of how they should be performed, such that changes in one realm have implications for the other. The term ‘social life’ also refers to changes and renegotiations of the value of participating among a community of other participants, which I shall describe below.

The institutionalisation of a moral and ethical code of conduct into the practice of the Zen arts took place in the Edo period, although its origins lie still earlier with the Samurai and their code for living (*Bushidō*). From the late twelfth century to the nineteenth century, the Samurai were among the most important political actors in Japan. Their values were important, particularly their cult of self-discipline which was learnt and remembered through the practice of the Zen arts. Samurai ideals expressed an overriding concern for presenting oneself to others according to neo-Confucian principles of education and social responsibility. This concern is enunciated by several different words such as *na* (‘name’), *haji* (‘shame’), *menboku* (‘face’), *chijoku* (‘dishonour’), *iji* (‘pride’) and *sekentai* (‘one’s appearance in the world’); but its most common English equivalent, much referred to in the early literature on Japanese society, is ‘honour’ (Ikegami 1995: 197). Eiko Ikegami’s recent study of the connexion between the Samurai code for living and contemporary social mores and values makes the following statement about honour: ‘The notion of honour not only is expressed as a concern for one’s social evaluation but is profoundly connected with one’s dignity, self esteem and identity. One’s honour is the image of oneself in the social mirror, and that image affects one’s self esteem and one’s behaviour.’

Because of this very nature, honour mediates between individual aspirations and the judgement of society' (1995: 23).

There are potential problems in relying exclusively on a term like honour, which has many diverse associations in the anthropological literature alone, to express the value of *reigi/kei* in the Zen arts. What is clear from Ikegami's study is that in the social world of the Samurai, which like the *iemoto* system for organisation in the arts was hierarchically structured, politeness and good manners acquired wider significance, and included political importance. The term *rei* (from which *reigi* is derived) was introduced by the Tokugawa state authorities in the Edo period, as part of a status hierarchy and used as an objective measurement of honour. *Reigi* can operate in a similar way for members of the arts today, as an index of the power, reputation and authority of the institution (including the *iemoto*) which organises practice.

Although *reigi* is not a term used in *Chadō*, here too an attitude of 'respect' for the status hierarchy imposes an order and social value on proceedings. The association of the concept *kei*, 'respect', with *Chadō* goes back to its origins and the influence of its founding figures. It is one of the four ordering principles adapted by Sen Rikyu along with *Wa* ('Harmony'), *Sei* ('Purity') and *Jaku* ('Tranquillity'/'freedom'). The most important function of *kei* is, as Andersen puts it: 'to validate the existing social hierarchy by convincingly reconciling it with the transcendent order' (1991: 215).

In the work of many commentators, but most famously that of Ruth Benedict (1946), the importance placed on 'honour' (and I would include) *reigi/kei*, 'respect' here as well) by politically powerful groups like the Samurai is seen as having filtered through into contemporary attitudes and social values. Lebra has written of honour, or rather the desire to avoid 'shame' or social censure, as the most important aspect in an individual's orientations to situations and in particular their status within a group or 'community' (*seken*) (1976: 79-80).



Regarding the Zen arts, I want to extend this notion of honour by moving beyond its sense of an individual's assessment in terms of the status hierarchy of the *iemoto*, and thereby displace the idea of the *reigi/kei* as direct idioms of power. The shift I propose is anticipated by Julian Pitt-River's definition of honour as a 'collection of concepts which are related to one another and applied differently by different status groups; defined by age, sex, class, occupation' (quoted in Ikegami 1995: 39).

I shall argue that in the world of the Zen arts 'honour' or 'respect' is evaluated not only in terms of the *iemoto* hierarchy, but also as part of a social community where networks of associations by factors like age, gender and occupation intersect with the vertical ordering of members by their achieved grade. By expanding upon the concepts of honour/respect in the Zen arts as more than the function of the *iemoto* structure, other concepts like 'taste' and 'distinction' may become more appropriate. However, before that discussion can take place it will be necessary to outline in some detail how *reigi/kei* function as objective criteria for the expression of honour/respect. Treating each criterion in turn as an external, prescribed, normative act, the code of *reigi/kei* manifests itself as follows:

(1) Gasshō Rei: This is the gesture of greeting in *Shorinji Kempo* used to indicate a 'spirit of respect for others'. It involves placing the palms together, spreading the fingers, and while keeping the elbows as high as possible, raising the hands to face level; all units of behaviour are punctuated by this gesture. You '*re*' on entering and leaving the training space, both to all of your fellow trainees, and collectively to your teacher and to the 'scroll' (*kakejika*) which hangs at the end of the hall. In *Chadō*, the logic of greeting is the same but the mechanics of the act are different and require the participant who is kneeling, not standing, to place their hands palm down, just in front of their knees, and bow deeply until the head almost touches the floor.

(2) Samu. This is a collective term for the activities involved before and/or after each practice to 'clean' a training hall clean. In *Chadō*, the concern for cleanliness extends to the actual gestures of the ceremony (where it might more properly be

called 'purity', *sei*), and for example to the lip of the tea bowl, which must be cleaned before the next guest can drink from it. More generally, *samu* means sweeping and mopping the practice area and its immediate surroundings. These tasks are everyone's responsibility, and a regular feature of most training regimes.

(3) *Dogi/Kimono* : The style, colour, and condition of the uniforms (*dogi*) worn by *Shorinji Kempo* practitioners reflect a concern for the purity of their wearers. They are white, the colour worn by Shintō priests, cut to be functional, in the style of a Buddhist priest's attire, and should always be spotlessly clean. They are a visible symbol to the wearer and to others that his/her actions come from motives that are totally pure. Not as strictly necessary as *dogi* for participation in *Shorinji Kempo*, *kimono* are the proper mode of attire for *Chadō*, but smart ordinary clothes are acceptable. There are a variety of designs and styles of kimono for men and women depending on factors like rank and the season of the year. The colours of these formal *kimono* are generally more conservative and subdued than those worn at festivals; as Andersen has noted, 'Orthodoxy in dress itself conveys a message of good training and respectability' (1991: 145-146). Other features of dress which in both *Shorinji Kempo* and *Chadō* are there to indicate the rank in and membership of a particular group are the 'belt', (*obi*) and badge or crest. In *Shorinji Kempo* the colour of the belt reflects rank, while in *Chadō* the type of knot used to fasten the belt around the woman's *kimono* depends on whether she is married or not.

(4) *Aisatsu* : These are the polite forms of address (*teineigo*) which all students are taught to use on entering the training hall, requesting training and thanking their partner/host/guest for their cooperation. These verbal expressions are prescribed and should not change or be forgotten, for their construction and use identifies members as belonging to an 'inside' (*uchi*) group. In *Shorinji Kempo* particularly, the grammatical forms and use of polite language reflect a willingness to cooperate with fellow members and to comply with the code of propriety (*reigi/kei*). The level of language used in *Chadō*, (*keigo*), is similar but more highly particularised, so

knowledge of the correct forms and how to use them also reflects rank and experience in the group.

(5) *Kyakka Shōkō* (lit. 'having a spotlight on your foot'): This is a Zen quotation that indicates the state of mind required of participants. No particular behaviour is attached to this dictum, which is fundamentally about an attitude to all action. That is, to self-consciously study oneself in all one's dealings with others. It encourages constructive - by which I also mean respectful - social interaction that will benefit the maturation of both sets of participants, be they training partners (*Shorinji Kempo*) or host and guest (*Chadō*).

It is particularly in *Chadō*, in the relationship between host and guest, that this attitude of self-conscious respect for others is expressed. In this context, the feelings may in fact be too powerful for a term like 'attitude' to be adequate; as Andersen points out, '*Kei* is, ideally more than a superficial attitude, it is supposed to be a heartfelt sentiment that synthesises important elements of reserve, reverence and restraint' (1991: 214). Andersen goes on to list four aspects of *kei*, all of which reinforce the structure and solidarity of the *iemoto* group.

- (1) Respect among actors manifested in etiquette.
  - (2) Respect between master and disciple as manifested in school structure.
  - (3) Respect for historic tradition of tea manifested in conformity to established practice.
  - (4) Respect for national identity, manifested in boundary maintaining behaviour.
- (1991: 214).

Within the terms of the *iemoto*, *kei* and *reigi* are manifested as objective acts which socialise members to the group context, providing a framework for practice and facilitating proper interaction. They are important in helping students to learn, because *Shorinji Kempo* and *Chadō*, take a long time even to achieve basic competency and a structure is necessary to help direct and guide students' efforts. Put simply, they remind everyone that what they are doing is important and different from what goes on elsewhere in everyday, informal situations.

However, even such a highly detailed and clearly articulated regime is not always coherent or consistently successful. There are differences and failures between individual sites and practitioners in the observance of *reigi/kei*. Continuous learning and constant reiteration are required. Some individuals occasionally resist and subvert aspects of the regime because they feel its demands are too 'strict' (*kibishii*), an unnecessary imposition on the process of technical training. These resistances are important, but I want to focus here not on the absence or corruption of particular behaviours, but on changes and differences in sentiment, often in spite of the observance of *reigi/kei*. Individuals may continue to observe etiquette, as a series of behaviours they perform, but not, I shall argue, as an attitude that unthinkingly and exclusively affirms the status hierarchy of the *iemoto*. Failures and differences to live up to *reigi/kei* are theoretically failures and differences to achieve performances of aesthetic value, but they are also indications of practitioners making other associations.

*Reigi/kei* create a powerfully structuring regime, but often what arose out of this were other feelings - of solidarity and commitment with practitioners of the same gender, and/or similar age, as well as expressions of individual 'taste'. This does not deny or negate group sentiments, according to members' common and collective participation as well as their division by grade, but questions the theory behind the notion of the *iemoto* that it is solely these sentiments which are channelled through *reigi/kei*.

We should begin an investigation of practitioners' involvement in *reigi/kei* by recognising that participation therein is a process of socialisation which has to be learnt as a series of behaviours. This begins with the 'entrance ceremony' (*nyumonshiki*), necessary for a new student to become a proper member of the group and to start training.

At the Bontenchō training centre for *Chadō* and *ikebana* (flower arranging), there is also a *dōjō* for practising *Shorinji Kempo*. The teacher, Ise Sensei, (husband of the *Chadō* teacher) takes *reigi* very seriously. Prior to any new student being allowed to practise, they should first arrange to come and watch a training session and then ask for permission to start practising from the teacher. Then, on the next occasion that the new student comes to the *dōjō* they will go through the brief 'entrance ceremony' (*nyumonshiki*). On one typical occasion that I observed this ceremony, two men freshly-attired in their new white uniforms (*dogi*) stood in front of the assembled class. Before them, on top of a low table, was a small wooden stool, a saucer, a bottle of *sake* and a scroll. Ise Sensei and his son stood behind the table, handed the scroll to each of the new students in turn and listened as they read aloud the 'oath' (*dokun*). This oath, which describes and underlines the proper orientation of every practitioner, is normally recited collectively from memory as part of every training session. After the recitation, Ise Sensei drank a small saucer of *sake*, poured by his son, and then offered the same to both of the new students, before finally receiving another helping himself. The ceremony combined Buddhist (textual recitation) and Shintō (*sake*-drinking) religious procedures in a formal, simple manner. Many, perhaps most, training sites do not perform an opening ceremony, concentrating instead on a brief introduction of the new students to the rest of the class and then taking them aside to learn the rules of *reigi*.

The importance to an initiate of *reigi/kei* is clearly set out for new students of *Chadō*. The ordering of space and one's movements within it are supposed to be so precise that without a framework for basic etiquette the new student may well feel directionless and be overwhelmed. Being new to the environment, and usually extremely self-conscious at their ineptitude, the new student needs to be able to show that their 'heart' (*kokoro*) is almost literally 'in the right place'. After the opening ceremony, or in its absence, the first thing a new student learns are formal 'greetings' (*gasshō rei* and *aisatsu*). A senior will demonstrate how and when to *rei* ('salute'), and what words accompany the gesture. The student learns by copying and assimilation does not take very long because the procedure is always the same, and

repeated often each session. The fact of performing the gesture and reciting the proper words validates the structure and order of the training space, but the manner in which they are performed may be understood by others as indicative of more individual sentiments.

In *Shorinji Kempo*, where the gesture of greeting (*gasshō-rei*), is often required, (whenever meeting another practitioner), and should be spontaneous, there is some resistance, especially to using this form of greeting outside a training space. Many practitioners, travelling to or from the training site and carrying a bag in one hand, only perform half the movement, with their free hand. Some children, also subvert the act completely, and open the palms of their hands at face level, to blow impromptu kisses to one another. These children were equally adept at playing with formal language (*aisatsu*) and instead of saying ‘Thank you very much for your co-operation’ (*arigatō gozaemashita*) at the end of a training sequence, they took some pleasure in calling out to each other: ‘Thank you very much for the meal’ (*Go chi sō sama deshita*). These are obvious transgressions of the *iemoto* hierarchy and largely to do with the way children’s behaviour is tolerated and even indulged in these kinds of settings. But there are other ways, less dramatic but more significant, in which *reigi/kei* may express individual associations. In fact, knowledge of *reigi/kei* and how it should be used can by itself be an indicator of generational and gender differences between practitioners.

In a conversation with a *Chadō* teacher about *keigo* (‘respectful/honourific language’), she told me that the most worrying aspect of teaching *Chadō* today was the lack of knowledge or appreciation for using formal language and gesture among young people. In the past, and among older members (particularly women) today, she could assume new students would have a basic familiarity with these matters. But now all younger students had to be taught even the basic mechanics of how to sit properly and thank one another politely. What distinguished the older members of her *Chadō* class was precisely their familiarity and ease with these basic features of social etiquette. Joy Hendry has pointed out (1991; 1993), that participants who know and



are able to use *keigo* can reveal themselves to others in particular way, 'with skill they can wrap themselves according to the image they want to present to the world and the persona they want to express' (1991: 27).

This idea of *keigo*, and by extension *reigi*, as forms of 'wrapping' which express both an individual's collective participation in the regime of an *iemoto* and signal differences by virtue of age, gender and taste is particularly useful here. For it is also possible for participants to express their individual differences and associations with others by a conspicuous style of dress. For women who practise *Chadō*, wearing a *kimono* may simply express membership and hierarchy of the *iemoto*. But this is only one level of analysis; for dressing up in a *kimono* also draws attention to the individual, who may use the opportunity as an occasion for conspicuous public display among women friends. This attitude was notable at the large annual gatherings for *Chadō*, where women spent a great deal of time and possibly money preparing themselves for the event. Some women bought a new *kimono* especially for the event, others hired or borrowed a *kimono* for the day; almost all brought cameras to record their participation.

They posed together with friends whilst queuing up to take tea, and enjoyed discussing the different colours and patterns of *kimono*, hinting all the time at their quality and expense. Dressing up in *kimono* at these events allowed for, and possibly even encouraged, a conspicuous display of individual wealth and status as well as of associations by gender. As an aspect of *kei*, wearing a *kimono* is only supposed to confer membership of the group upon the individual, but it can also be used to express other ideas and associations even to the point of being a vehicle for 'wrapping' a conspicuous and positive image of the self. Feminist criticisms of women's participation in *Chadō*, which were expressed to me, argue that *kei/keigo* reinforce the image and inferior position of the Japanese woman as a 'good wife and wise mother' (*ryōsai kenbo*). However, using Hendry's metaphor of 'wrapping' to describe the operation of *kei/keigo*, we can see that women's participation may also expresses their power to spend time and money dressing up and improving themselves

through leisurely pursuits. Liza Dalby also suggests this in her book, *'Kimono'* when she writes that 'Co-ordinating *kimono* and *obi* (belt) according to colour, pattern, season, age and formality can be a great challenge - like any engrossing hobby, it costs money and time and gives great psychological rewards when done right' (1993: 199).

'Cleaning' (*samu*) is an aspect of *reigi/kei* that has been defined as a means for the wrapping, or in this case 'polishing', of a self that is not distinctive by either a conspicuous display of wealth or a necessary orientation to the group hierarchy. In the Zen arts there is a possible meaning for cleaning which is borrowed from the practice of Zen proper where it has a central role as a metaphor for 'enlightenment'. The relevant expression is 'cleaning the spirit' (*kokoro no sōji*) (Reader 1995: 232). Treating an everyday task like cleaning as a regime for the 'spirit' (*kokoro*), is suggestive of the self-conscious attitude known as 'having a spotlight on the foot' (*kyakka Shōkō*), which a practitioner should exhibit in all their actions and dealings with others. However, in my experience and that of others at training centres for the Zen arts, cleaning was rarely approached explicitly as an exercise for the individual 'spirit'. Usually, it was explained as a task or set of tasks done as a group for the collective benefit, and merely to keep the facility clean.

The communal cleaning in which I participated at the main temple and headquarters of *Shorinji Kempo* on Shikoku took place at both ends of the day, before and after practice. All the students were divided into small groups, each with an allocated area to clean in the thirty minutes or so of available time. Between the two cleaning sessions each day, every part of the temple - its training halls, offices, toilets, even the grounds outside - was meticulously cleaned. Often the task was quite unnecessary in terms of removing dirt, it was what Reader has described as 'work created for its own sake' (ibid: 231). But the fact that everyone was willing (or resigned) to do it at all, and together with everyone else, affirmed one's position within the group.

This communal attitude towards cleaning in *Shorinji Kempo* puts it in line with practices in other contexts such as schools and the work place, where through carrying out the same kinds of tasks each individual may demonstrate their relationship to the group as well as simply keep the space orderly and clean. The difference with cleaning in the Zen arts is that other meanings are directly relevant, in particular that it can be treated as an exercise for the 'spirit' (*kokoro*).

The execution of any of the behaviours involved in *reigi/kei* cannot be treated unequivocally as the objective expression of a singular attitude of 'respect' (*reigi/kei*), or as 'having a spotlight on your foot' (*kyakka shōkō*). At the same time that *reigi/kei* develop a self-conscious attitude of respect for the group hierarchy, they provide a space for the expression of sentiments of friendship based on other factors like age and gender. They may also be a means for the conspicuous display of individual worth. For *reigi/kei* not only defines an attitude of sociality, but also allows for the articulation of individual feelings and associations in meaningful, recognisable concrete forms. In an activity like *Shorinji Kempo*, which involves intense and potentially dangerous physical exchanges, *reigi* can serve to deflect inconstant or even volatile feelings into a familiar, shared, social framework. Similarly, in *Chadō* the experience of making and serving tea or of being served it, may give rise to sentiments that through *kei* can be expressed in a coherent and valued form. However, we should not assume that if little attention is paid to *reigi/kei* or if it is absent altogether, there is no sociality or means for the valued articulation of sentiments of group friendship. At the Culdy Centre on Port Island where Mori Sensei teaches, there is very little structure to his adult class; no limits to interaction except what the techniques demand to be well-performed. For new students to the Culdy Centre, it is very difficult to know how to behave; where to stand, when and how to ask for help. In other training sites that I have mentioned before, like those at Rakutō *dōjō* in Kyōto and Bentenchō *dōjō* in Osaka, the classes are so formally structured that the student literally 'fits' themselves into a social framework.

Mori Sensei often made a point of parodying by over-exaggeration the type of attitude from which an unquestioned attention to *reigi* can result. What he was critical of were the ways in which the automatic copying of *reigi* can lead practitioners away from the main business of practice, which for him is the technique. His parodies also made me aware of just how constructed and exaggerated the power and authority of the *iemoto* that is based on *reigi* must be. For with a teacher like Mori Sensei, whose skill and charisma both drew respect and fostered strong sentiments of friendship between students, the need for *reigi* was surpassed by his personal presence. But notably, when he was absent, there was little structure to training and our efforts seemed purposeless, accomplishing little. Often on such occasions we left training early and returned home, since having become unfamiliar with anything other than Mori himself to guide and control our training regime, *reigi* had lost its power to compel us. *Reigi* and *kei* may create profoundly conservative regimes, for they exaggerate deeply held social themes and moral values, but without their coercion, practitioners risk losing direction.

I have tried to show above that any attempt to create a particular kind of socially-attenuated self can only be partially successful, for although the power of such regimes is highly articulated and unforgettable their effects are not exclusive nor uniform. Success and compliance at one level (hierarchical) are cross-cut by other associations, additions, and even resistances to the regimes themselves.

*Reigi/kei* do remain broadly consistent and coherent in all training sites. But this is not only because they are enforced by the *sensei* and the idea of what a *dōjō/chashitsu* should be like, nor is it necessarily because they resonate with associations of other places for education and work. It is because they demonstrate the often exceptional nature of experience in the Zen arts, and the need for there to be the sense of an order and an established value to the way participants interact with each other. *Reigi/kei* make students self-consciously aware of their participation by articulating in concrete forms of behaviour what is required of them. The boundaries and limitations on interaction produce specific disciplines, but they may also confer rather than restrict a

sense of freedom, for example, by releasing participants from the worry of how to behave.<sup>1</sup>

In an examination of cleaning in Zen temples as an activity with shared goals Reader has written: 'It is irrelevant whether these goals are desired or even cared about by separate individuals, what is important is the form the action takes and the manner in which it is done' (1995: 227). Although Reader concedes that 'in theory' (ibid: 228) cleaning should express an 'inner meaning that is of value to the individual performing the action' he stresses that the most important thing is that the act expresses a group or 'public' (*tatema*), ideology. From this perspective, it is difficult to acknowledge how *reigi/kei* can have other possible significances, dependent upon context, and upon factors like the age and gender of the individuals taking part. The problem is that the literal meanings of *reigi/kei* do not always correspond directly with the motivations and sentiments of all those who carry out the necessary practices. As forms of 'wrapping', (Hendry 1993) *reigi/kei* only reveal certain aspects of the participant and may actually conceal others.

Nevertheless, *reigi/kei*, as a framework for practice and an expression of the *iemoto* hierarchy, evoke such expectations across all these different situations that commentators like Dorine Kondo have written that the emphasis on etiquette in *Chadō*: 'embodies the appreciation of formalised social interaction. The theory is that mere good intentions are insufficient; one must know the proper form in order to express one's feelings of hospitality effectively' (1985: 288). Following this definition, *reigi/kei* turns the training site into a social and moral training ground for participants, where codes of etiquette function to make distinctions in the *iemoto* hierarchy. According to Reader and Kondo, what we have in *reigi/kei* are exercises in 'public' ideology (*tatema*), meaning here that it is a product of a need to impose order on the world and designed to control and filter the expression of individual desires.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a point which Hendry makes in 'Wrapping Culture' (1993).

*Tatemae* is a concept which ‘includes the idea that there are certain rules which define conduct between individuals’ in all ‘public’ situations, and is part of what Roger Goodman calls the ‘ideology’ of Confucianism (1992: 10). But we should not infer from this that practices of *tatemae* behaviour in the Zen arts are the manifestation of a single ideology of Confucianism.<sup>2</sup> As Jan Van Bremen has argued, Confucianism should be described as a ‘family of doctrines, practices and schools’ (ibid: 131). The practices of *reigi/kei* in the Zen arts reflect a concern for formality and respect that was at its height in Chu Hsi neo-Confucianism during the Edo period. But today, treated as practices in *tatemae* behaviour, *reigi/kei* emphasise a ‘group lifestyle’ (*shūdan seikatsu*), which is supposed to foster the same order of social relations across the entire sequence of ordered learning in Japan. The extent to which the Zen arts are organised and taught through *reigi/kei*, along group lines as a form of ‘social education’ (*shakai kyōiku*), brings them into line with mainstream education, and establishments like schools and universities.<sup>3</sup> The Zen arts may define themselves as doing something more than education, but through *reigi/kei* they are also moral exercises in *tatemae* behaviour. As outlined in the diagram below the social organisation and method of training in the Zen arts embodies deep cultural contradictions and embraces many possible meanings.

|                     |                                     |  |  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Ethos of Training:  | <i>reja</i><br>‘leisure’            | <i>seishin kyōiku</i><br>‘spiritual education’ | <i>shakai kyōiku</i><br>‘social education’ |
| Object of Training: | <i>jigai</i><br>modern ‘individual’ | <i>kokoro</i><br>‘heart’                       | <i>shūdan seikatsu</i><br>‘group living’   |
| Place of Training:  | culture centre                      | <i>dōjō/chashitsu</i>                          | school/university                          |

We cannot surmise directly the internal quality of a ‘respectful’ (*reigi*) or ‘heartfelt’ (*kokoro*) performance without possibly parodying the performer who is amongst

<sup>2</sup> There are, as I noted in chapter two, elements of both Chu Hsi and Wang Yang Ming Confucianism in the Zen arts.

<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the degree to which the Zen arts are organised and taught with regard for the individual and their ‘modern lifestyle’ (*modān seikatsu*), brings them into line with other forms of ‘leisure’ (*reja*).



other things a particular individual of a certain age/gender/occupation. Behaving according to *reigi/kei* means not only accommodating and respecting the relative status differences by grade of others in the group, but also negotiating and possibly articulating 'individuality' (*kosei*). I am not using 'individuality' here in the sense of ego-centrism or 'selfishness' (*kojinshugi*)<sup>4</sup> but as an aspect of 'distinction' or 'taste' (*shumi no ii*).

The concept of 'distinction' is borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu's theory (1986) about the relationship of artistic activity to class. Bourdieu argues that the establishment of class, or social differences between practitioners and patrons of the arts in France, is the outcome of aesthetic judgements made about performance. Aesthetic judgements are acts of comparing and contrasting ourselves with others. It is through the application of an aesthetic vocabulary to these acts that participants can create a social identity and a sense of individuality. Social difference or class, then, is created through a 'field of practices', such as can be found in the arts and is not a 'category' made up of essences.

When we apply this theory to the Zen arts, performance can be regarded as an act that has the power to mark a social boundary with non-participants and to reaffirm the hierarchical divisions of the *iemoto* system between participants. Practising with attention to *reigi/kei* as an integral part of the aesthetic act identifies the performer as an individual of 'taste' (*shumi no ii*), one who has the ability to manifest and confer various distinctions. Treated as exercises in taste, the Zen arts reproduce and legitimate the distinctions between social classes, ages and gender, and give members the means to manifest individual boundaries. Leslie Pincus sums this up when she writes of Japanese 'taste' as 'the personal or collective cultural<sup>5</sup> nuance that becomes visible at the time of an aesthetic or moral judgement' (1996: 203). Bourdieu's

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to distinguish 'individualism' from 'individuality' in the Japanese case, for as Hendry has indicated (1992), the former is usually negatively sanctioned and the latter is the subject of cultivation and admiration.

<sup>5</sup> The aesthetic/moral distinctions instituted by the Zen arts operate on various levels, to manifest and confer differences between cultures and differences within cultures (which is what I have been concentrating on here).

'*social critique of the judgement of taste*' (1986) is particularly useful for including within a single theory the aesthetic and moral aspects of the Zen arts, and the various individual and social distinctions which participation can manifest. However its practical application as a term which could define the Zen arts is limited, since the word 'taste' (*shumi*) is applied selectively to only certain of the Zen arts. I shall argue that as long as we do not confuse the theoretical concept of 'taste' with the Japanese term, *shumi*, (and allow for the inclusion of other related terms) the value of Bourdieu's thesis, '*Distinction*' (1986) is useful and relevant.

There have always been significant gender differences in levels of participation and in the creation of value in the Zen arts. These differences have their origins in the social history of each activity and are in most cases<sup>6</sup> reinforced by their contemporary representation. *Chadō* and the 'martial ways' (*Budō*) are both part of a status culture for the nobility (*kōzoku*) which Lebra (1993) has written about, and are regarded by them as being able to confer a sense of privilege, which is relevant to gender. Lebra notes that what tends to be important among men of high status is not so much the refinement of 'taste' (*shumi no ii*), but to be seen to be disciplined in an activity which preserves the hierarchical tradition of the *ie* (1993: 192). This was the rationale for doing *Budō* among the nobility which Lebra describes and is also important among practitioners today.<sup>7</sup> The connection with the discipline and tradition of the *iemoto* is an idea most popularly represented and endlessly repeated in the '*Tale of the Forty Seven Samurai*'. The persistence and pervasiveness of this tale in various media, such as books, 'comics' (*manga*), and television is indicative of the evocative power of the Samurai Confucian code as a moral and ethical guide to correct 'honourable' behaviour. It is what Ikegami describes as '*honorific Individualism*' (1995). Even if the image of the stoic and heroic Samurai from this tale is something of a myth - for there are numerous examples from the Edo period literature of hedonistic Samurai - it is nevertheless a compelling myth. This kind of

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<sup>6</sup> *Chadō*, for example, was exclusively a male activity until the Meiji period, but its contemporary representation focuses almost entirely on female participation.

<sup>7</sup> Before mass participation in the Zen arts transformed them into extensions of Leisure and Education, they were almost exclusively the preserve of the nobility (*kozoku*), and the wealthy.

evocation of the Samurai as solitary and self-controlled individuals continues among those who practise the martial arts today, where credit for achievement can accrue to the individual, to a degree not found in other Zen arts. In my own participation in *Chadō* and *Shorinji Kempo*, the distinctions which were being made between ourselves and others, and also among ourselves were made with reference to different aesthetic and moral criteria.<sup>8</sup> Terms used in the *Budō* like ‘belly’ (*hara*), ‘guts’, (*konjō*), ‘spirit’, (*seishin*) and ‘suffering’ (*kurō*), carry aesthetic and militaristic connotations and affirm the sense of a strident masculinity. I never witnessed or heard about these terms being used to talk about women participants. It was almost always male participants with seniority in the organisation who drew upon this vocabulary of terms, to describe the difference between a good and a bad performance, and the correct attitude a practitioner ought to display. Used in this way, to assert the value of discipline and austerity, these terms constitute a masculine aesthetic.

The other way in which male participation in the *Budō* could be affirmed was through the *iemoto* system. Achieved status by men within the *iemoto* of a *Budō* like *Shorinji Kempo* (which ideally passes on authority exclusively through men) can speak far more deeply in cultural terms to their sense of masculinity than could a woman in an equivalent position. The point is not that men who study *Shorinji Kempo* seek to be ascetics, monks or modern-day Samurai, just as women who do *Chadō* do not necessarily desire to be solitary aesthetes; however they are at least aware of and may be enchanted by these flattering images of themselves. These gendered differences in the value of practising *Shorinji Kempo* and *Chadō* became clear through my simultaneous involvement in both activities. The communities of practitioners with whom I practised *Shorinji Kempo* were surprised and even amused by my involvement in *Chadō*. They often joked that *Chadō* was such a ‘womanly thing’ (*onnano koto*), to be doing. The vocabulary which women used to appreciate their own participation in *Chadō* included terms like ‘neatly’/‘properly’ (*chantō*), ‘gentle’/‘tender’ (*yasashii*), ‘womanly’/‘feminine’ (*onnarashii*), and ‘beautiful’/

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<sup>8</sup> Significantly they were in both cases, aesthetic and moral distinctions.

‘lovely’ (*utsukushii*). These terms support a view of *Chadō* as nurturing, emotional, anti-intellectual and intuitive. They form a ‘feminine’ aesthetic which is distinct from the hard, disciplined austere values of the *Budō*.<sup>9</sup> The creation of this aesthetic must be related to the history of *Chadō* in the post-Meiji (1868) period when women were first allowed to participate. Their overwhelming interest and participation during this period demonstrates how aesthetic values can be renegotiated in line with social movements<sup>10</sup> like the development of the ‘leisure’ (*reja*) industries.

When I spoke with women about their personal involvement in *Chadō*, ‘leisure’ (*reja*), was the theme of almost all responses, and only in exceptional cases did individuals describe themselves as ‘artists’ (*geitjitsuka*). This should not suggest that women participants adopted a casual attitude to *Chadō*, for they spoke also with appreciation about one another’s efforts to display ‘good manners’ (*reigi sahō*), and to speak ‘politely’, with ‘care’ (*teineigo*). Once the *Chadō* event was completed participants often retired to another location, where they conversed less formally but often about topics to do with refined ‘taste’ and privilege. Among the group of women with whom I practised *Chadō*, conversations centred mostly on my being English and their perception that therefore I had a background in another tea-drinking culture. There was a strong perception that English and Japanese tea-drinking were connected by being refined expressions of social status and national culture in both cases. Often, after we had finished Japanese tea, we would retire to a Western-style living-room with thick carpets and large leather armchairs, to take ‘English tea’. A great deal of care and some pride was taken by the host in serving tea in the ‘proper’ English style, often with a Wedgwood china tea-set and a small plate of sandwiches or fruit cake. When I began to make and bring my own fruit cake to those gatherings, the members thought it important enough to invite others of their friends along to take part, ignoring the Japanese tea event altogether. Eventually, in the clearest possible indication of a perceived parallel between these two national styles of tea-drinking,

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<sup>9</sup> Joy Hendry has suggested this kind of distinction when she talks of the ‘aesthetic power of language’ (1991: 10).

<sup>10</sup> Brian Moeran (1997: 213) has noted a related development in the post-war connection between art, consumption, and gender.

my fruit cake found its way onto the tray of Japanese sweets (*okashii*) served during *Chadō*. The enthusiastic interest in English tea stemmed partly from the novelty of the event and my supposed native expertise, it was also evidently an event enjoyed for its overtures of privilege and status.

How may it be possible then, to reconcile both an aesthetic approach towards *Chadō*, as an exercise in ‘taste’ (*shumi no ii*), with a more stoic and disciplined approach to a martial way like *Shorinji Kempo*, as an exercise in ‘honorific individualism’?

In both instances, we are discussing the deliberate crafting of a distinct sense of the social self, and perhaps ‘distinction’ is more useful than either ‘taste’ or ‘honour’ because it can accommodate the sense of both these terms as they apply to the Zen arts. I want to use ‘distinction’ as a term which includes social aspects of the self such as age, gender, and occupation. This list is not supposed to exhaust which factors constitute and distinguish a sense of self, only what I have been able to clearly identify in this context. When used in this way, distinction is a form of self-consciousness, and the Zen arts can be understood as powerful and authoritative means for presenting oneself correctly to others according to age, gender, and occupation. Distinction, like taste or honour, is about self-consciously being, for example, a woman of a particular age and background who can consistently affirm and even celebrate these facts by practising *Chadō*. It has been argued that the Japanese are particularly self-conscious about the image of themselves as a nation to the rest of the world, and of their appearance as a person to others (Clammer 1997: 70). Taking part in one of the Zen arts therefore, is a cultural accomplishment relevant to both these concerns (anxieties) in that it can be seen as producing a distinct and coherent sense of the self.

There is a sense in which participation by itself confers an identity, as a member of a particular *iemoto* group. However, what I am talking about here is how networks of association by age and gender, as well as ideas about status, bring people to practise and connect existing members across the *iemoto*’s hierarchical lines of stratification.



The gender and relative age of participants are acknowledged in *Chadō*, and guests may be seated according to these criteria. But this is still an extension of the *iemoto* system and not a recognition of how each individual also brings aspects of themselves to practice, and possibly discovers unexpected new ones in the course of training. It is also an argument against the predominant view of 'public' behaviour (*tatema*) as an expression of middle-class homogeneity. William Kelly and John Clammer are two commentators who have argued against this idea, discussing in particular the theory of 'generation cohorts' (*sedai*). These are new social categories that emerge in the 'life course' (*raifu cosu*), and constitute part of the so called 'micro-masses' (Clammer 1997: 23). The development of the micro-masses is a replacement by a much more differentiated society of middle-class consciousness (*chūryū ishiki*) of the affluent 1970s and early 1980s. Other forms of stratification in this period include the groups formed by the 'ageing society' (*koreika shakai*). The subsequent emergence of the 'silver industries' specifically for these groups has now become a major factor in the culture and 'leisure' (*reja*) industries. It was the expansion of the leisure industry which allowed for women to distinguish themselves as a group, on the basis of their mass participation in certain activities like *Chadō*. Many casual observers of Japan assume that women are in a distinctly second class position, but in terms of having the time and money to take part in and enjoy leisurely pursuits they are far more powerful than men. Since the economic boom of the 1960s women, especially urban housewives, have become the primary consumers of leisure, taking up pastimes like *Chadō*. For most of its five hundred year history *Chadō* has been practised exclusively by men and it is only since 1894 that women have been allowed to become teachers and to perform in public. Initially, their involvement was resisted because it was felt that they had more important responsibilities at home as wives and mothers. However, with active encouragement from *urasenke*, the largest of the two main schools of *Chadō*, women's participation has risen to the point where they now constitute eighty per cent of the total membership. Although men remain in dominant positions of authority, *Chadō* has come to have far more significance for women because, as B.L.R. Mori writes, 'these arts affirm traditional views of women as nurturing and supporting others in society. At the same time they allow women to



pursue personal goals of self expression, artistry, and the development of managerial skills' (1996: 117).

Participation also encourages identification with one of the two main age groups into which women members are generally divided. The first of these groups comprises young unmarried women who may treat *Chadō* primarily as an opportunity to get a certificate enabling them to make a good match. The other, more powerful group consists of older women, whose children almost certainly have left home, and who may be widowed. They tend, more than their younger counterparts, to treat the group as a social gathering, enjoying the company and support of others with similar experiences and concerns. What both of these age groups share is a sense of participation as an expression of women's power, as consumers of 'leisure' (*reja*), something which men simply are not able to do on anything like the same scale.

Characteristic of both *Shorinji Kempo* and *Chadō* for all participants, are the ways in which the *iemoto* operates today so as to create an environment for the expression of group sentiments and associations. As B.L.R. Mori has noted about *Chadō*, 'The product of *Chadō* is not the tea you drink, the bowl you drink it from, or the room you drink it in, but the people who drink and make tea' (ibid: 126).

When we look at the variety of practices and an individual's associations across time and space, there are increased possibilities for the distinction of practitioners from each other: firstly, by the different capacities for signification of each training site, and secondly by the ways in which practice can be ordered by *reigi/kei*. Cross-cutting the vertical matrices of power and authority of the *iemoto* and articulated most coherently in particular kinds of places, are individual associations of age, gender, and status/wealth. There are differences and possible tensions between the classification of participants by their position in the hierarchy and the distinctive identity of each individual. This has tended to be overlooked by treating aspects of the Zen arts such as *reigi/kei* as solely expressing and upholding the principles of the *iemoto*.

The *iemoto* organisation operates on many different levels not just on the single one of expressing and maintaining an hierarchical structure of authority. Asserting that this is what the *iemoto* is about cannot tell us how individual practitioners exist and take part in these structures of authority. Topics of conversation among the women with whom I practised *Chadō* were often about subjects that had nothing to do with tea, and usually concerned their own lives and interests. Typical discussions about the recent affairs of family and friends and upcoming events in the neighbourhood, like festivals, movie premieres or concerts, were all matters that affected them socially as individuals and had nothing to do with observing the rules of *Chadō*. Many of the women participating in *Chadō* came across as particularly self-assured individuals. Conversations often touched on particular details of their own lives, even while engaged in such demanding practices.

At one tea-gathering that I attended, held in the private tea house of a teacher in Osaka, just such a conversation took place. It revealed details about the husband of one participant and changed her estimation by, and position within, the group. The conversation took place between the guests as we knelt, watching tea being prepared in front of us by the teacher. It centred on the husband of one of the guests who, we were told, was an artist, well-known for his pottery. There was in fact an exhibition of his work being held that afternoon in a nearby department store. The guests spoke with admiration and surprise when they heard this, nodding in agreement to one another that he must be an 'important man' (*erai hito*), and his wife therefore an important person. His wife smiled discreetly at these comments, saying rapidly and in an embarrassed fashion, 'Thank you, but this is not me, that is my husband'. She said this two or three times, as comments like 'how proud she must be' were exchanged. Everybody spoke in the same 'polite' language (*teineigo*), but used it to distinguish one participant in particular. Highlighting the status and the participation of this individual at that moment, seemed to have the effect of affirming every participant's involvement. But there was also a certain amount of good humour in this conversation, and one needs to be careful about attributing too much to it. We can be clear that the tea room is supposed to be a place where all the distinctions of the

outside world are left behind, where only the order of the *iemoto*, expressed as *kei*, prevails.

Whatever the individual motivations and sentiments, by the end of the conversation the guest in question was treated by all the others as a very important person, not merely because of her husband's occupation, but also on account of the polite and refined situation in which this fact was revealed. There was a sense in which this gathering of women, approximately of the same age, enjoying a tasteful event in the intimate surroundings of a tea house, had actually facilitated this conversation and lent weight to its revelation. However, commenting on the personal aspects of a participant may also be a source of tension, particularly if for example their occupation is not so prestigious.

The *Shorinji Kempo* teacher, Mori Sensei, may have been famous within the organisation, but his occupation was known to very few people. Initially I was told that he drove a taxi for a living as a whispered 'secret' (*himitsu*). But it also became clear that this fact was a source of humour and some lively yarns for Mori Sensei himself. Perhaps he enjoyed the contradictions that others perceived, between his mundane job and his elevated status within the *Shorinji Kempo* organisation. In the opinion of his students though, it was another example of his individual nature and drew us all closer to him. Other teachers, who knew him differently, were often hesitant or embarrassed to bring the subject up. One teacher, overly sensitive about Mori's public image, even went so far as to write on an official document that Mori's occupation was in fact a 'managing director' (*shachō*), pushing the limits of how it is possible to describe a *Shorinji Kempo* teacher.

Generally, issues like occupation rarely came up in discussions about identity in the Zen arts. They are not considered a relevant or proper aspect of any individual's participation; but I have aimed to show that age, gender and occupation are elements of distinction, and important aspects of the experience of those who take part. Or, to put it more simply, that there is more than one way of characterising the Zen arts in

the experience of individual participants across time and space. We have seen how the *iemoto* model can manifest itself through a singular relationship with the teacher (*sensei*), with a particular place (*dōjō/chashitsu*) and with a code of conduct (*reigi/kei*), and how all of these may be negotiated in different ways by individual participants.

The problem with the social science paradigm which has informed the interpretation of the *iemoto* is that it cannot account for (i) the ways in which the Zen arts emerge within a temporal and spatial dimension as the product of historical forces; and (ii) it tends to obscure the self-consciousness of participants as distinctive individuals. What I mean by this is that the perceptions of the people who manifest and as complex individuals realise these structural bonds are considerably absent. They are subsumed beneath what Robert Smith has called a 'Metaphor for Groupness' (1985: 30) where the value of interdependence and the 'virtuosity of perseverance' (ibid: 36) expressed in terms such as 'to bear' (*ganbaru*) and 'to abjure' (*enryo*), 'to bear' are paramount. For Smith, following G.H. Mead, the Japanese sense of self is externally orientated and meaningful 'insofar as he or she is an outgrowth of the relationships established by the operative context' (ibid: 39). The expression of this rather poorly attenuated self is reduced to their position in the hierarchy, an accretion of their role as 'participant' and their experience to the rhetoric of 'abjuration' and 'carrying/bearing'). In existing theories, the nurturing and sometimes determining hierarchy of the *iemoto* to confer identity on its members, allows little space for the considerations of other social forces and for agency. The theoretical focus on, and attribution of power to, organisational structure has tended to conceal what are really assumptions about changes in selfhood. An aspect of this assumption is that the alternative to groupness is alienation and selfish individualism. My argument has been for an explanation and explication of the lived space between the valorization of the *iemoto* ideal and its iconoclastic deconstruction. That attempt is based on the idea that in all cultural recognition of selfhood we must avoid confusing this with the discretion allowed to an individual to be individualistic (Rosenberger 1992); in other

words, to recognise that participants in the Zen arts regularly adapt aspects of the *iemoto* model to themselves.

It is as an ideal, rather than as a body of structural concepts, that the *iemoto* is made meaningful for individuals; which is to say that through the deployment of particular practices and symbols, the principles of the *iemoto* may be actualised in the consciousness of participants. There may be broad structural similarities in the organisation of and value attributed to 'inside' (*uchi*), 'inside' relationships in the spheres of work, family and the Zen arts but their articulation, symbolic significance and personal value are quite different. We should not expect a simple, direct connection between the meaning invested in a bow to the tea master after receiving tea, and that to the 'boss' (*shachō*), on leaving work, even if they are perhaps the same person. What we are at risk of ignoring otherwise are the contingencies of context and ability of the individual to make judgements. It is within the terms of the *iemoto* orthodoxy perpetuated by various discourses and practices, that its formal character is favoured at the expense of the meanings created by individuals.

This is not to suggest that practitioners of the Zen arts resent and resist the idea that relatedness to others is a manifestation of cultural value. The autonomy and integrity of the self is only compromised by the assertion that individuality is exclusively a function of its 'relatedness' to others. The ascription of cultural value to the *iemoto* makes the possession of formal, social skills for its expression a form of 'distinction'. In other words, the degree to which relatedness is expressible within the physical regime and symbolic universe of the Zen arts and actually expressed in performance is a manifestation both of the authenticity of 'Japanese Culture', and the distinction ('taste' or 'honour') of the performer.

Explanations for the existence and continued efficacy of the idea that there are Japanese traits like corporate/group identity, hierarchy, and role-identification are to be located in internal discourses on national identity. The idea that the Zen arts, as expressive regimes of aesthetic values and the *iemoto* principles are a metaphor for

Japanese culture, which I shall detail in the next chapter, emerged out of the concerted attempts of intellectuals and educators to filter out distinctively 'nativist' elements from the modernising and homogenising effects of encounters with the West (Pincus 1996).

The presentation and persistence of the *iemoto* concept within authoritative cultural discourses authenticates its symbolic representation and performance by individuals as an expression of value that may be both publicly and privately compelling. In the absence of the discourses on the *ie/iemoto*, it would be hard to sustain the notion of a 'real' Japan and of a continuous 'tradition' in the Zen arts. However, the potential for the displacement of the power and authority of these discourses by the distinctive self has been demonstrated above.

The *iemoto* is not, during practice, constituted by its structural principles, because it is constantly being re-negotiated by self-conscious individuals who accommodate their membership to their own identities. The culture of the *iemoto* reposes within individuals who adjust, not always effectively (nor calculatingly) their membership and participation in the Zen arts with the responsibilities and relationships of work, family and friends. The articulation of individuality is filtered through an orientation to a teacher, to space, and to a code of behaviour.

In discussions of the *iemoto* we should not confuse the sharing of common forms and methods of expression with shared meaning. Even if participants do recognise and use similar forms of organisation, there is also in the course of normal practice misunderstanding and confusion over orthodoxy. It is not a question of whether through these shared structures the participant learns to think as a 'Japanese' or even as a *Chadō/Shorinji Kempo* practitioner, but whether he/she learns to think some of the same things, as Anthony Cohen has pointed out in his discussion of the self (Cohen 1994: 64).



The capacity of the individual to adjust and adapt within the shared idiomatic forms of the *iemoto* is to make the power and authority of the system meaningful in their own terms. If we were unable to make these kinds of moral and ethical judgements (and to decide what is more or less 'real' for us in the context of our own lives) then we would be nothing more or less than the reflex of structure and the echo of discourse.

The idea of the *iemoto* in discourse implies continuity between the past and the present and between different spheres of life; but for the practising individual it only has efficacy as long as it authenticates participation, recognising both the structural interconnectedness of practitioners and their individuality.

## Chapter 7

### Culture as Aesthetic Form

In the last four chapters I have argued that the aesthetic code and *iemoto* structure of training in the Zen arts have no essential orthodoxy in practice. These features are remade in the experience of practitioners in particular contexts. The question which this argument raises is whether as an idea and an ideal of Japanese national culture the orthodoxy of the Zen arts is similarly susceptible to the intervention of the individual. Approached as forms of Japanese culture, can the Zen arts be refashioned in the image of each practitioner? This argument cannot ultimately be sustained because it suggests that collective entities like Culture and the Nation can be fragmented to the level of individual consciousness in just the same way as features of the Zen arts orthodoxy. The social and embodied experiences of practitioners are important for an investigation of the culture of the Zen arts, but cannot explain the Zen arts as 'Japanese Culture'. What I shall argue in this chapter is that the idea of Japanese Culture which is expressed by the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts does not occur naturally or spontaneously, but is constructed at particular historical moments. In the 'modern' period (post-Meiji) for example, scholarly discourses focused on aesthetics to formulate a response to the social changes taking place, and in the process helped shape a growing nationalist movement.

In the post-war period, this association between the arts and a discourse on national character has continued and been powerfully evoked in the public domain on two occasions: the suicide of the author Mishima Yukio in 1970, and the Nobel prize awarded to the novelist Yasunari Kawabata in 1968. Both men were passionate about Japanese art and aesthetics, and although they chose to work in a very public and publicised medium - the novel, each in their way was writing against the values of mass society. Mishima's own values were excessively nationalistic, and demonstrated a concern for 'Eros, death and the affected style 'gongorism' of the Japanese

Romantic school' (Kato 1997: 349). These values that were most dramatically exhibited in his self-immolation. The 'phantasy world' (Yamanouchi 1980: 152) of Mishima's fiction and the manner of his death provoked debate within the arts community, and added to the fascination of foreigners for Japanese art.

In contrast, Kawabata's Nobel prize two years earlier had been greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm and respect. His acceptance speech was titled '*Japan the Beautiful and Myself*' (*Utsukushii Nihon to Watakushii*). It used the language of the Zen arts with terms like *kyomu* ('emptiness') and *mu* ('nothingness') to look back nostalgically to a pre-modern Japanese spirit and appeal to a 'time-encrusted Japanese aestheticism' (Ōe quoted in Fu & Heine 1995: viii). Kawabata's speech did not simply evoke the culture of aesthetic form; it also contained a strong element of anti-modern protest: 'To see my novel *Thousand Cranes* as an evocation of the formal and spiritual beauty of the tea ceremony is a misunderstanding. It is a negative work, an expression of doubt and a warning against the vulgarity into which the tea ceremony has fallen' (Kawabata 1969: 67-68).

This speech is a vitally important benchmark for our investigation of the idea of the Zen arts as Japanese Culture, because it appeared at a time (late 1960s, early 1970s) when 'nostalgia' (*natsu kashisa*) was going through a boom period. Pollution scandals, the loss of guaranteed lifetime employment and with it the inviolability of the 'Company as Family' ethos, had engendered a change in national consciousness. His speech was part of a nostalgic looking back, a desire for a return to what it was supposed had been lost in the post-war period of massive urbanisation and industrialisation. As Raymond Williams' book, '*The Country and the City*' (1973) demonstrates, this kind of romantic idealism was a characteristic reaction to change across the industrialised world, and therefore Japan was not unique in looking to an image of the past so as to come to terms with an industrialised present.

The concern for a recovery of the past was also reflected in the political arena by the rhetorical emphasis on an original 'national culture' (*bunka kokka*). After the

immediate post-war period when national policies and attention were fixed otherwise - on rapid economic growth, 'Culture' was not part of a coherent national policy. In the 1970s, a political shift spoke of a 'Robust Culture', built on 'two thousand years of tradition' (Prime Minister Nakasone, 1980), and of a 'new age transcending the age of modernisation when "Culture" would replace economics as the distinctive marker of national identity' (Prime Minister Ohira, 1979); (both quoted by Gluck 1973: 72). This rhetoric was part of a nationalist resurgence known as 'Theories of Japaneseness' (*Nihonjinron*). It constructed an idea of the past by identifying certain features, structures of social relations, and aesthetic concepts (both of which are elements of the Zen arts) as 'National Culture' (*bunka kokka*). Kawabata's speech, which should be included within this 'theory', articulated a nostalgic idea of a Culture under threat. But at the heart of his speech was an ambiguity which, as we shall see, runs through the whole aesthetic discourse of the Zen arts. It is a contradiction which David Pollack identifies in Kawabata's work: 'Kawabata employs the aesthetic structure of *Chanoyu* to imitate and naturalise the ideological forces of dominant social relations and political structures, to reflect and buttress that reality at the same time<sup>1</sup> that it challenges and subverts it' (1992: 100-101). Kawabata worked within a valued medium, the aesthetic form of the novel, that relied upon a mass society and the publicity of its media for its dissemination and effect. Yet these were the very social conditions which he wrote against.

The irony of this contradiction is heaviest when we consider the commercial impact of Kawabata's speech on the domestic tourist industry. Two years after the Nobel prize, and designed to run alongside the 1970 world exposition in Osaka, the advertising agency Dentsū adopted Kawabata's slogan as part of a campaign to encourage the public to use the Japan National Railways and 'Discover Japan'. It was to become the most successful and longest-running campaign in Japanese advertising history, and has been discussed in some detail by Marilyn Ivy in her book '*Discourses of the Vanishing*' (1995). Ivy argues that prior to this campaign there were fixed ideas about travel in Japan, as a means to engage passively with other places and 'confirm'

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<sup>1</sup> My emphasis.

what was already known or expected of them. The experience of 'Expo 70' which encouraged visitors to 'participate' (*sanka suru*) in events, changed all this, as Ivy states: "Discover Japan" intended to develop this desire for contact by pointing the way from the passive social confirmation of scenic beauty to the active, personal appropriation of experience within travel, alluding to earlier forms of pilgrimage and poetic peregrination that relied on the solitary, experiencing subject' (1995: 45). The campaign also coincided with what was known as a 'leisure boom' (*reja boom*), a consequence of increased time and money (particularly among women), that I have mentioned above. Not only was travel possible, it was desirable, for like participation in one of the Zen arts, it allowed the individual to make 'contact' with nostalgic ideas about Japanese Culture. It is time to ask: what this idea of Culture as aesthetic form is, which a novelist can evoke to such effect? I am not suggesting that Kawabata had anything personally to do with Dentsū's campaign or with the political movements of the period, but his Nobel prize and the speech which followed it were necessary for their popular appeal.

We have already analysed the physical forms and conceptual underpinnings of the Zen arts, and seen that they cannot be simply understood within the particularity of their aesthetic values and structure of relations (*iemoto*). These values and structures are always caught up in a network of relations to individual, social and embodied experiences as well as to the specific context. What I shall examine here are the philosophical and political dispositions of the Zen arts as an historical series of discourses about 'Culture'. This investigation is divided into two sections. Initially, I will outline the history of the relationship of the Zen arts' aesthetic values to the exercise of political power in Japan. This section will end with a brief examination of the background to the commercialisation of the Zen arts in the modern period. The last part of this chapter looks at how as a result of commercialisation the idea of Japanese Culture which resides in the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts is now exhibited in various commodity forms and visual media.

## Section I: An aesthetic history of the Zen arts.

I have identified five political discourses relevant to the aesthetic history of the Zen arts, which begin with their emergence in the medieval period and continue through to the present: *kōgi*, ‘theory of public good; *kokugaku*, ‘theory of national learning’; *kokutai*, ‘theory of national polity’; *nihonjinron*, ‘theory of Japaneseness’; *kokusaika*, ‘theory of Internationalisation’). Identifying how participation and patronage in the Zen arts was legitimated for political and commercial ends as far back as the Muromachi period, means re-evaluating the perception that the aesthetic values of the Zen arts today are constituted as a reaction to modernisation. By looking at the history of the Zen arts as a series of exercises in aesthetic form and political power, we are asking who and what has the power to represent the Zen arts.

My examination of the early relationship between the artistic realm of aesthetic forms and political and commercial concerns is based on a number of important studies, focusing on a range of the literary and visual arts (Lafleur 1986; Marra 1991, 1993; Goff 1991; Thornhill 1993; Brown 1997; Guth 1993; Sandford, Lafleur & Nagatomi 1992). What all these studies demonstrate is that from the medieval period, discourses on aesthetics ought to be regarded ‘as the result of political discontent whose formulation, forbidden in the political arena, could only be raised at the cultural level’ (Marra 1991: 7). The literary and visual arts demonstrated antithetical values of world rejection and world affirmation. The key term used here is ‘eremitism’, meaning hermitic reclusion; a state which characterises the ascetic ideal of those who participated in and patronised the arts. As Kendall Brown points out, ‘For those who controlled the government, literary or artistic discourse on the aesthete-recluse could represent a perfect alternative social order, the endorsement of which demonstrated the righteousness of their rule’; whilst at the same time, ‘For those on the periphery of political power the same verbal or visual image might posit the ideal world of the aesthete-recluse as an implicit criticism of the normative political order’ (1997: 53).



At the centre of this world of aesthetic reclusion was the aesthetic value of 'courtliness' (*miyabi*). In fact, *miyabi* did not only mean courtly refinement, it was also used by important scholarly figures like Kamo no Chōmei (1153-1216) to register spiritual withdrawal and a total rejection of power (Marra 1991: 11). It was only later, under the influence of another scholarly-aesthete, Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1350), that aesthetics were re-established in the political world. Kenkō worked on combining in *miyabi* a 'double epistemology': the Buddhist logic of ascetic withdrawal, and the Confucian philosophy of world affirmation, in order to re-establish the utopian past of the Heian period as a reference point for the present (Marra 1991: 142). As Kenkō says nostalgically in his major work *Tsurezuregusa* ('*Essays on Idleness*'), 'In all things I yearn for the past' (quoted in Kraft 1992: 15). Reconstituting *miyabi* in this way, allowed it to become part of the Confucian theory of *kōgi* or 'public good', so that the political order could be legitimated and perpetuated by accomplishment in cultural pursuits. The aestheticism of Kenkō and the arts at this time can be summarised as follows, 'Kenkō's Confucian values redirect Buddhist tenets toward a redefinition of society suitable to the reality of the time. The realm of aesthetics is reincorporated into the social structure, finally re-entering the world of power' (Marra 1991: 12).

The idea of religio-aesthetic reclusion which emerges for the first time during this period is politically ambivalent. In the subsequent history of the Zen arts, this complex and contradictory relationship to the centre of authority continues to reappear, and is particularly evident during troubled times. In the Momoyama epoch, for example, both of the famous generals, Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) took control by force of arms, but used cultural accomplishments in *Chadō*, *Nō* drama and *Renga* poetry to establish their legitimacy to rule (Brown 1997; Marra 1993).

Ideas about the past, idealised in aesthetic forms, continued to have political weight in the Edo period (1600-1867) where they were incorporated into a 'nativist' discourse. This was the school of 'historical and national learning' (*kokugaku*), which aimed to

restore a 'true' Japanese spirit. As an aesthetic discourse *kokugaku* is most closely associated with the theories of the literary scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). Norinaga, like Kenkō before him, used aesthetics to criticise the political conditions of the present and construct an alternative version, through an idealisation of the past. The difference in the aesthetic nostalgia of the eighteenth century, from that of Momoyama period aestheticism, is that the former disassociates itself from Confucianism. This is a point about which Peter Nosco has written: 'What changed in the eighteenth century, however, was first, that the idealised depiction of the archaic past became an only thinly veiled critique of the present, and second, that the nostalgic fantasy was transformed into an exhortation either to escape the present by re-entering the past spiritually (as advocated by Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769) or to reanimate the numinous qualities of the past within the fallen present (as prescribed by Motoori Norinaga 1730-1801)' (1997: 287).

The conditions Norinaga was reacting against and trying to replace were 'foreign', neo-Confucian approaches to life learning. Neo-Confucianism, particularly the form known as *chu hsi*, was the dominant force in Edo period social and political life, stressing the value of a system of social ethics (Colecutt 1991: 128). It was an attempt to understand existence in rational terms, and Norinaga proposed that in its place should be established an intuitive and allegedly Japanese sensibility - *mono no aware* - variously translated as the 'ability to be moved by things' and as 'the pathos of things'. *Mono no aware* was at the heart of nativist attempts to establish a tradition of Japanese literature that was pure and untainted by foreign elements. It was also an antecedent form of artistic nationalism.

However, outside this particular period we should be careful not to associate the aestheticism of the arts exclusively with nativism and the idea of unsullied Japanese tradition, opposing it to other philosophical systems like neo-Confucianism and Shintō. The arts have always been an area where, as we saw in chapter two, a number of philosophical systems - Shintō, Zen Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism - were intertwined such that aspects of any of these systems could potentially be expressed as

an aesthetic form. In the Edo period, the Samurai practice of the literary and martial arts was treated partly as a form of moral education, stressing Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety. Later, in the Meiji era, scholars of the Mito school drew together Shintō and neo-Confucianism and advocated the literary and martial arts as a means for learning and expressing the values of these systems, with slogans like, 'Shintō and Confucianism are one' (*shinju-funi*), 'literary and martial arts are not incompatible' (*bumbu-fugi*), 'loyalty to sovereign and loyalty to parents are one in essence' (*chūkō-ippon*) and most fervently of all 'revere the emperor and expel the barbarians' (*sonnō-jōi*) (Draegar 1974: 20). This last slogan became one of the rallying cries of the Meiji reformers and the sentiments aroused by it are at the root of the Taishō and Shōwa period nationalist discourse, 'national polity' (*kokutai*). Within the terms of these nationalist ideologies, the arts, and particularly the martial arts, were redefined. As one leading figure of the Meiji government, Itō Hirubumi, said of *Bushidō* (the code of the 'Way of the Warrior'), it 'offered us splendid standards of morality, rigorously enforced in the everyday life of the educated classes. The result ... was an education which aspired to the attainment of stoic heroism, a rustic simplicity and a self sacrificing spirit unsurpassed in Sparta, and the aesthetic culture and intellectual refinement of Athens' (quoted in Draegar 1973: 31-32).

Practice and patronage of the arts (and particularly those arts in the Meiji period which expressed the code of *Bushidō*) was an effective way of advancing political interests and constructing an idealised image of Japan. However, it was also a way of furthering commercial interests, which like the politicisation of the arts also has a history challenging assumptions that the objectification of aesthetic form as 'Culture' is the direct result of modernisation. Although commercialism was a factor in the aesthetic evaluation of the *Budō*, during the Edo period, (through their inclusion in Samurai education, and private academies), it was not until the post-war period, when *Budō* were treated as a sport for mass participation, that it became a constitutive element.

In other Zen arts, like *Chadō*, commercialism has much earlier origins. Key figures in the development of *Chadō*, such as Sen Rikyū, came from and relied upon the merchant community for expanding the popularity of their art. Once we enter the Edo period, the commercial value of *Chadō* to the growing merchant community was such that the idea of the aesthete as hermit, who rejected the world, was surpassed by that of the 'tea person' (*chajin*) who relied for the continuance of his art on the patronage of wealthy men, like Masuda Takashi (1848-1938). Masuda Takashi was one of an emerging group at the end of the Edo period whose activities as practitioners of *Chadō*, and avid collectors of its utensils, had implications for the role and value of aesthetic form.

Catherine Guth's recent study of Masuda (1993) has shown that he and his associates engaged with *Chadō* as an aesthetic form which could create personal prestige and social legitimacy (through the image of a cultivated gentleman) and also affirm Japan's cultural identity in the face of a growing Western fascination with the arts. Masuda felt so strongly about the business opportunities which the *Chadō* environment could provide that he began a club (founded around 1873) to assemble those with similar interests in politics and business. A friend of Masuda, Shibusawa Eiichi, took this association a step further, and stressing the neo-Confucian ideals which lay behind the sociality of *Chadō*, recommended a redefinition of *Bushidō* as 'the way of the merchant' (Guth 1993: 144). The fascination of Masuda and others for art collecting ran counter to neo-Confucian ideologies which frowned upon such selfish activity. They legitimated their passion for collecting art by attaching it to the communal gatherings of *Chadō*.

*Chadō* became a means for men like Masuda not only to display their own personal cultivation and advance business interests, but also to instil company values such as group loyalty, and even to assert a version of national identity. To use *Chadō* to express communal values anticipated one strand of the future development of the arts - as a means for social education.

We have already seen how *Chadō* had always had ideological overtones, but through the artistic tastes of collectors in the late Edo and Meiji periods it became a vehicle for nationalist sentiments. This is, as I shall discuss, similar to the way in which the aesthetics of *Budō* were redefined from the Meiji period so as to be an expression of the moral and ethical values of a vociferous nationalism; a development which arose out of its co-option by extreme right-wing secret societies. To understand how *Chadō* could be treated as part of a National/Cultural aesthetic means locating it first of all within the context of Buddhist art collecting.

During the persecution of Buddhist institutions in the Meiji era, there was a lively trade in appropriated religious artefacts. Removed from their temple surroundings, the 'devotional value' of these objects was superseded by aesthetic and commercial values (Guth 1993: 100). It was a situation which gave wealthy foreigners like Emile Guimet (1836-1918) and Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) the opportunity to amass and deport huge collections of Buddhist art. This motivated Japanese aficionados, and eventually the state authorities, to begin a process of re-evaluating Buddhist art for themselves, but according to aesthetic and historical criteria rather than the objects' religious worth (ibid: 106).

It was a situation which led a conservative intellectual like Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945) to write an important booklet in 1891, *'The Japanese: The true, the good, the beautiful'* (*Shinzenbi Nihonjin*), which was concerned to determine and preserve a Japanese aesthetic sensibility. A key phrase of these writings is 'preservation of the national essence' (*kokusui hōzan*), which redefined the role and value of art; as Guth notes, 'art became inextricably associated with the national essence, it assumed a near mystical quality that provoked widespread concern about its export' (1993: 167). The consequence of these developments for activities like *Chadō* was the kind of 'artistic nationalism' espoused in influential books such as Okakura Kakuzō's (1862-1913) *'Book of Tea'*.<sup>2</sup> Okakura Kakuzō's literary efforts to inscribe Japanese culture

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<sup>2</sup> Okakura Kakuzō was a student of Ernest Fenollosa and began a journal, *Kokka* ('National Essence'), for Asian Art.

shared an ideological premise with many others of his generation: 'Civilisation and Enlightenment' (*bunmei kaika*). In the mid-Meiji period (1880s and 1890s) many intellectuals such as Okakura were concerned at the effects of modernisation and sought a critical assessment of them. I am using the term 'modernisation' to refer to three processes: urbanism, a structure of capitalist relations, and commodification.

Organisations like the 'Society for Political Education' (*seikyōsha*), which tried to define a national identity, were among the earliest expressions of a sense of cultural crisis. These early-Meiji nationalist organisations were forerunners of the cultural and ethnic nationalism of the 1930s, although with some important differences. Kevin Doak (1994) has indicated that a point of agreement between these two forms of nationalism was that modernity, 'signified a new historical consciousness' (xvi), and of their differences writes that, 'The "Meiji spirit" stemmed from an awareness that anything was still possible in Japan's modernisation, but by the 1930s modernisation was complete enough to present "modernity" as an object of criticism'. These differences are articulated in the work of one of the romantic poets, Takayama Chogyū (1871-1902), as a distinction between 'essence of the state' (*kokusui*) and 'Japanism' (*nihonshugi*) (Doak 1994: xv).<sup>3</sup>

The anti-modernist discourse, which was also a discourse about 'Japanism', took root in the late-Meiji and Taishō eras, at a time when a new value system of commodities associated with urban, professional lifestyles was flourishing. An emerging managerial middle class was one group in particular which felt itself imposed upon, and tried to defend itself from the dictates of a corporatist state and a mass society through an engagement with various intellectual and artistic debates. These concerns were intensified in the Taishō era and expressed distinctly as a sense of the loss of tradition. The various intellectual movements which theorised and articulated this sense of loss defined their interest in politics increasingly in terms of aesthetics, leading to the so-called 'Aesthetic lifestyle debate' in the 1920s and 1930s. This

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<sup>3</sup> For the romantic nationalists' modernity was defined in at least three ways: (i) a foreign influence - the 'West' (ii) The Meiji state and its ideology of 'civilisation and enlightenment' (iii) 'the peculiarity of Japanese Culture in its only existent (if decadent) form' (Doak 1994: xvi).



debate redefined aesthetics as the authentic idiom of the nation and its difference from the West. The ethnography of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the poetry of the Romantic school, the cultural particularism of Kuki Shūzō (1888-1941), Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960) and Tanizaki Junichirō (1886-1965), the philosophy of the Kyōto School, were all attempts to gaze back (as Kawabata did in 1968); to define and to recapture Japan's authentic national culture in the face of encroaching modernisation. What enjoined this literature, poetry, ethnography and philosophy was an assumption that a particular kind of practice, an artistic practice for example, could produce a particular form of culture.

Watsuji Tetsurō's theory of 'cultural layeredness' (*bunka no jū sōsei*), was designed to give form to the attempt to recover the past, transforming historical time into a cultural space. Yanagita Kunio's idea of 'abiding folk' (*jōmin*), based on his concern for the preservation of an ancient folk tradition articulated a powerful ethnic nationalism as 'ethnology' (*minzokugaku*), and shared with the Romantic poets an anti-modernist aesthetic. The connection of these kinds of nostalgic musings with historically prior discourses is well illustrated by Junichiro Tanizaki's translation of the classic novel from the Heian period, *Genji monogatari* ('*The tale of Genji*'), which was a medieval source and inspiration for the *miyabi* aesthetic. His translation captured the public imagination and provoked a popular interest in serialised historical novels from the early years of the Shōwa period.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to distinguish, as Benedict Anderson does in his general discussion about the origin and spread of nationalism (1983), these Japanese movements as popular forms of nationalism, different from their official counterpart, the 'national polity' (*kokutai*). They are more properly described, in Anderson's terms as 'ethnic nationalism', and in Japanese as *minzoku shugi/nihon shugi*. This form of nationalism is the kind of romantic 'revival' which Anthony Smith has written about as: 'At one and the same time an attempt to preserve the past and to transform it into something

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<sup>4</sup> Tanizaki was also the pen name of one of the most famous essays on native Japanese aesthetics, *In'ei raisan* (1934), '*In Praise of Shadows*'.

new, to create a new type upon ancient foundations, to create a new man and society through the revival of old identities' (quoted in Doak 1994: xviii). We would be wrong therefore to label these movements as 'inventions of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) for as Doak astutely remarks, 'The choice was not either modernity or Culture but both' (1994: xix).

The view of culture which these literati and intellectuals shared was, 'Culture not in the broad anthropological sense of the material and symbolic production of a way of life but in the narrow and normative sense of a moral and aesthetic value' (Pincus 1996: 11). The conditions for what Pincus calls a 'National Aesthetics', the nostalgic orientations and ideological dispositions of the arts, with their constant promise of a withdrawal or escape from the world, had always been an aspect of the Zen arts. But only now within the modern concept of the 'nation' did they coalesce so forcefully and imaginatively as the expression of 'Japanese Culture'. In the work '*The structure of Edo Aesthetic style*' ("*Ikī no Kōzō*"), by the philosopher and cultural critic Kuki Shūzō (1930) we find one of the most enduring and influential attempts to locate and define a truly Japanese aesthetic (*Ikī*).<sup>5</sup>

Kuki asked what kind of structure aesthetic values possessed. It was a question based upon a crucial assumption for this thesis, that aesthetic value can be structured and reified in concrete forms with determinate meanings. Pincus' excellent recent study of Kuki has demonstrated that he drew upon a theory of the expressive power of language to substantiate and bear the burden of proof for a theory of aesthetic form. Words such as *ikī* were invested with the power to singularly manifest the *minzoku* or 'ethnic/national' identity.<sup>6</sup> 'This single meaning and its linguistic rendering serve as the self expression of the national mode of being in past and present, the self revelation of a unique culture endowed with its own history.' (Kuki Shūzō quoted in

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<sup>5</sup> Kuki was impressed and influenced in his work by Okakura Kakuzō's books, '*The Book of Tea*' and '*Ideals of the East*' (Pincus 1996: 32).

<sup>6</sup> Pincus defines the *bunka minzoku* or 'culture folk' as follows, 'This is a naturally determined community that can be accomplished and revealed to itself only through its works, specifically, art, philosophy and language (the language of the community)' (1996: 229).

Pincus 1996: 151-152). Like Kenkō in the medieval period and Norinaga in the Edo period, Kuki relied upon a single term, *iki*, to represent aesthetic experience, or as Pincus puts it, 'to stand in for the whole' and reveal 'ontological truth' (ibid: 152).

What distinguished Kuki's attempt from those prior efforts, was its relationship to an anti-modernist and nationalist discourse. The paradox and the irony of Kuki's attempt and others like him, is that although this 'civilisation and enlightenment' (*bunmei kaika*) discourse was founded on antimodernist sentiments, when culture is imagined as a system of aesthetic and moral value, and reified in concrete forms, it requires circulation through a network of mass media forms and associations in order to increase and realise its value. However, at the same time, the equalising effect of these forms, such as print or visual media, threatens to erase the cultural differences of aesthetic forms. This is the ambiguity and the strength of the idea of the aesthetic in the Zen arts, always between withdrawal and confirmation, difference and inclusion. It is the same paradox which Hobsbawm (1990) has argued is also at the heart of the idea of the 'Nation', and this is one reason why the Zen arts can be such potent symbols of Japanese national identity.

The concerns and anxieties reflected in these intellectual reactions to modernisation were not unique to Japan, but were shared by late-nineteenth century Europeans. There is a substantial and growing body of research (Pincus 1996; Doak 1994; Nosco 1990; Parkes 1987; 1991 and Faure 1993) demonstrating that in the 1920s and 1930s there was an important interchange of ideas between Japan and Europe. I explored aspects of this exchange at the beginning of this thesis, and described the influence and various borrowings of Japanese art and religious philosophy upon European intellectual, literary and artistic movements. The relations of power between Europe and Japan were not 'hegemonic', as the use of Said's concept 'Orientalism' (1978) might imply. Ideas about Japanese Art and Culture, and the Zen arts in particular, were constructed by European 'virtuosi' within the intellectual framework of the 'Japonisme' discourse. What I want to discuss here are some of the ways Japanese scholars borrowed imaginatively from European and particularly German philosophy.

These borrowings were important for the substantiation of a theory about the aesthetic forms of activities like the Zen arts as Japanese culture. They were intellectual movements with explicit political implications, both countering, and in some case contributing directly to, the nationalist ideology (*kokutai*), of the late 1930s and 1940s.

The most sustained and influential area of contact between European and Japanese philosophy in these years was the German *Kulturwissenschaften* ('cultural sciences'). These sciences were embedded in hermeneutics, an idealist philosophy linked and opposed to the increasingly alienating and disenchanting qualities of 'mass' society. It was a project which as Pincus says 'offered refuge in a conception of culture as truth and guaranteed a restoration of cultural continuity with a carefully crafted past' (1996: 17). At the heart of this idea of culture was aesthetics which were structured according to an organic logic, meaning that as 'a given cultural artefact', they shared in 'the ineffable, inward, and incalculable value of a larger whole' (ibid: 66). The 'whole' or universal cultural essence was defined as the concept *geist* ('spirit') and was translated variously in Japanese as *seishin* or *satori* and even *Yamato damashi*, the 'Japanese Spirit'. The theory of *geist* was introduced to Japan by a German scholar, Raphael Köber (1848-1923), who had taught philosophy at Tokyo university, and reached its fullest expression in Japan as the philosophy of *Kyōyō shugi*. Pincus defines this philosophy as follows, '*Kyōyō shugi*, from the German *Bildung*, refers to a Taishō philosophical movement that extolled the virtues of self-cultivation, particularly in what concerned aesthetic, ethical and spiritual accomplishments' (1996: 34).<sup>7</sup>

This anti-modernist hermeneutic philosophy established Culture (*Kultur*) as aesthetic form, reclaiming it from modern social life and interiorising it as a narrowly focused state of 'being' or type of 'experience' (*Erlebnis*). Important and influential philosophers, including Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962), Kuki Shūzō and Nishida Kitarō

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<sup>7</sup> *Bildung* is described by Willey, quoted in Pincus (1996: 57) as 'moral and aesthetic cultivation through classical education'.

(1870-1945), all turned to 'experience' because like William James (1842-1910) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) they saw it as a realm of authentic 'being' increasingly under threat. They could also define this 'experience' or 'state of being' in terms of the Japanese *minzoku* or 'indigenous culture' (ibid 55, 79). When used in this way what we are looking at in the idea of Culture as aesthetic form is what Kuki Shūzō calls an 'hermeneutics of national being' (quoted in Pincus 1996: 148).

There is a great deal more sophistication to the engagement by Japanese philosophers with German hermeneutics than the themes I have identified above. However, it is sufficient for the purposes of this thesis merely to elicit the origins of these themes in order to show how the theory of National Culture as aesthetic form is part of a deliberate construction at a particular historical moment. What now needs to be shown is how this theory came to be applied specifically to the Zen arts. The aim is to elicit from a particular discourse on Zen, those aspects which allow the Zen arts to be the object and the vehicle of national sentiments. One useful way of understanding this process is through the work of the Kyōto School of Philosophy, where we can see many of these themes applied to the Zen arts in the writings of Daisetsu Suzuki and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi.

The founder and most influential philosopher of the Kyōto school, Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945), worked partly in line with the other intellectuals of the period that I have mentioned for example Kuki Shūzō and Watsuji Tetsurō, formulating a response to a perceived malaise in the condition of modernity. He was also part of the attempts by religious scholars to redefine Buddhism after its persecution in the Meiji years. They argued that the Buddhism of the Edo period was a distortion of a true, original form of Buddhism which should now be reclaimed. Zen was at the core of these attempts, and was redefined as being at the root of all religions, its most original form, expressing 'pure experience'. The 'pure experience' of Zen was not only the basis for all religious experience, but for a specifically Japanese experience. There are parallels with hermeneutic culture theory, particularly the notion of 'pure experience' as a form of religious particularity, equivalent to the cultural specificity of *geist*.

It was Nishida Kitarō, particularly in his work 'A study of the Good' (*Zen no Kenkyū*) who was largely responsible for developing this theory of 'pure unmediated experience' (*junsui keiken*). But as Robert Scharf has recently shown, Nishida was greatly influenced in this theory on 'religious experience' by the work of W. James and R. Otto. Furthermore, the terms which Nishida used for 'experience', *keiken* and *taiken*, are uncommon in texts before the Meiji period (in Lopez 1995: 124-125). The use of the term *taiken* appears to be deliberately manipulative, and is especially significant for the application of this theory to the Zen arts because as Pincus has shown, its compound refers directly to the physical body, and therefore it, 'facilitated the tendency of Japanese theories to embed experience in nature and thus remove it from the reach of critical thought' (1996: 78).

This theory of 'pure experience' is first extended formally to the Zen arts in the writings of D.T. Suzuki, particularly in his '*Zen and Japanese Culture*' (1946).<sup>8</sup> It is the Zen character of the arts which is stressed in Suzuki's writings, to the exclusion of all the other religious, social and political influences that we know about from the historical record. Through the theory of 'pure experience', all of the arts in Japan are made to appear to be the natural expressions of Zen thought, and therefore of the authentic spirituality of the Japanese. Japanese Zen, Suzuki writes, 'has come in substance to be the basis for the Japanese character; thought, religious faith and esthetic tastes' (quoted in Lopez 1995: 128).

The most complete expression of a theory to link aesthetic form, the pure experience of Zen, and national/cultural identity, comes in the work of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi (1889-1980). Other writers, such as Okakura Kakuzō and Kukariya Kaiten (1867-1943), the latter a friend of Suzuki and a Zen priest, had written of the arts like *Chadō* and *Budō/Bushidō* before Hisamatsu. But in Hisamatsu's '*Zen and the Fine Arts*' (1971) we have, 'the first full synthesis of (1) the philosophy of Nishida with its

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<sup>8</sup> Scharf has pointed out that many of Suzuki's ideas on Zen should be attributed to his time spent studying under the American theologian Paul Carus at La Salle Illinois (in Lopez 1995: 117-121).



rhetoric of 'pure experience' (2) the notion that Zen is the essence of all religious teachings and (3) the evolution of a fully laicized form of Zen practice' (Scharf 1995: 131). Hisamatsu's is a compelling account which continues to inform the most recent works on Zen and the arts, like that by Yanagida Seizan '*Zen and Japanese Culture*' (*Zen to Nihon Bunka*, 1985).

Hisamatsu studied under Nishida, and like him went on to teach philosophy at Kyōto university. There, he was the centre of a small but influential group who learnt *Chadō* and Zen practice from him. The most lasting legacy of his efforts to promote Zen is the 'FAS Society', formally established in 1958, but originating in a small Zen group, the *Gakudō-dōjō*, formed in 1944 when the war was going badly for the Japanese. The FAS Society is explained in one of its journals as follows, 'The name of our society - F.A.S. - refers to the three dimensions of human life, namely, Self, World and History as an inseparable whole - 'F' stands for the Formless self awakening itself, 'A' for taking the standpoint of All human kind, and 'S' for creating Suprahistorical history' (quoted in Lopez 1995: 132).

The origins of this society and Hisamatsu's own work indicate a nationalistic agenda centered on the idea of 'oriental nothingness' (*tōyōteki mu*). It is an idea which Hisamatsu argues is most fully expressed in the traditional arts of Japan. He describes it as follows, 'I have long spoken of "Oriental Nothingness" ... I qualify it as Oriental because in the West such Nothingness has never been fully awakened, nor has there been penetration to such a level. However, this does not mean that it belongs exclusively to the East. On the contrary, it is the most profound basis or root source of man; in this sense it belongs neither to the East or West. Only as regards the actual Awakening to such a Self, there have been no instances in the West; hence the regional qualification "Oriental" (Quoted by Scharf 1995: 133).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Scharf has criticised Hisamatsu's, Susuki's and Nishida's writings on Zen as having no basis in history or practice and being a 'modern' construction (In Lopez 1995).

It is understandable how statements like these have been characterised as Zen ‘occidentalism’ (ibid: 131) or ‘Reverse Orientalism’ (Faure 1993). The language of *tōyōteki mu* and *junsui keiken*, when employed by scholars like Nishida, Suzuki and Hisamatsu to emphasise Japanese uniqueness lends itself to a nationalistic ideology. Their scholarly discourses bring together existing ideas to create the theory that Zen artistic practice reproduces an aesthetic register which describes the character of the Japanese people. Individual experience is not denied in this theory but made the locus of a national ‘essence’, which is also said to be the fundamental core of all religious traditions. As part of the ‘universal’ religious experience Zen is accessible to foreigners, but being a uniquely Japanese and non-rational phenomenon, is difficult for them to absorb. The paradoxical rhetoric of the particular and the universal has made the Zen arts, as symbols of national identity, powerful agents of recent political attempts to ‘internationalise’ (*kokusaika*) Japan.

The rhetoric of the ‘Kyōto school of philosophy’ also posits that the universal spiritual experience which is the ground of Japanese aestheticism and nationalistic assertions is an a-historical essence not compromised by the passage of time or different contexts. The aestheticism of the Zen arts avoids being fixed by historical context because the language used is rhetorical, and not concerned with social and embodied experience. Attempts to translate Japanese terms reflect this linguistic ambiguity. The rhetorical language of these concepts is important because in their intellectualisation to the point of abstraction by philosophers, and in their ideological utility, they are forms of nationalism. I am not suggesting that theories about aesthetic form in the Zen arts are intrinsically nationalistic. It is only in their historical manifestations, for example, in the pre-war period, that certain disciplines such as the *Budō*, became a form of state nationalism (*kokutai*). For the most part in this post-Meiji period, the Zen arts were part of a popular nationalism, which defined itself against the state and its modern agenda. This was, as Doak (1994) has pointed out, a form of ‘ethnic nationalism’ (*minzoku shugi*), based on spiritual and cultural values, different from and often in opposition to, state nationalism. The difference between these two forms of nationalism is demonstrated by the transformation of the *Budō* between the pre-war

and post-war periods, a subject covered in detail by Donn Draegar's Study '*Modern Bujutsu and Budō*' (1974).

In the immediate post-Meiji period the martial arts were supported and promoted by ultra-nationalistic secret societies including the 'Black Dragon Society' (*Kokuryokai*), founded in 1901, (of which Doshin So was to become a member) and by state sponsored associations such as the 'Great Japan Martial Virtues Association' (*Dai Nippon Butokukai*), founded in 1895 in Kyōto. Both groups stressed the importance of martial training as a form of general education, continuing the tradition of Edo period education and the inclusion of the martial arts in the curriculum of private academies (*bugei*). By 1911, the ministry of education had made *Jūdō* and *Kendō* compulsory in all middle schools in Japan. What was new about the *Budō* in this period, and a consequence of the rise of nationalistic ideologies, were the claims most passionately voiced by secret societies, that the *Budō* were a 'way of loyalty and patriotism' (Draegar 1994: 45); an expression and affirmation of personal commitment to the 'emperor system' (*tennō shugi*). The activities of these secret societies, in conjunction with the theories and writings of scholars like Suzuki, Nukariya Kaiten, (1913) and Nitobe Inazo, (1906) made the *Budō* instruments of nationalism (ibid 1974: 44-48).

As extensions of political ideologies the *Budō* demanded rather than invited participation and were not generally popular in the Meiji and Taishō periods. It was only in the post-war period, through the modernising efforts of key figures like Kanō Jigorō in *Jūdō*, Gichin Funakoshi in *Karatedō*, Moriya Ueshiba in *Aikidō* and Doshin So in Shorinji Kempo, that the *Budō* began to lose the taint of militaristic state nationalism. Crucially important for the revival of the *Budō* and the lifting of the prohibition on them imposed by Allied forces since the end of the war, was the interest shown by American servicemen in learning these activities. From the 1950's, the martial ways became steadily more popular as sports or 'new' (*shin*) *Budō* and reached full national and international recognition with the inclusion of *Jūdō* in the programme of events for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. But at the same time, there were

concerns and criticisms about how far the *Budō* had deviated from their ideals in becoming popular pastimes. In 1972 Sahashi Shigeru, a former vice Minister of Industry and an *Aikidō* practitioner wrote '*The true Budō*' (*Shin no Budō*) which decried the shifts towards becoming a sport and invoked *satori* as the proper goal to training (Draegar 1974: 51).

The association of this kind of rhetoric with 'theories of Japaneseness' (*Nihonjinron*), was not uncommon at this time in the late 1970s and 1980s, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter with Kawabata's Nobel speech. The rhetoric and theories of the *Nihonjinron* discourse were a version of nationalism similar to that of the intellectual debates in the 1920s and 1930s. Like those debates, what was at stake was, as Carol Cluck has noted, 'how free the present could, or should, be of the past', meaning here the wartime past (Gluck 1993: 64). In the case of the Zen arts and in particular the *Budō*, this meant indicating what had changed since 1945 through demonstration at public and international events (such as the Tokyo Olympics) and through the use of a particular kind of language. This point about the political language of the post-war is well made by Gluck and worth quoting at length, 'Officials transposed their speech into what may have seemed safely demilitarized words: *minzoku*: the ethnic people (not *kokumin*, the statish people); *bunka*, culture; and *seikatsu* livelihood or standard of living. Repeated in varying combinations, these words described the future in terms of "the rebirth of the people" a guaranteed "cultural livelihood" in a "cultural nation" (*bunka kokka*) or a "national culture" (*minzoku bunka*) - all phrases reminiscent of wartime ideology but now couched in the post-war terms of democracy and peace. The litany of culture worked both to displace politics and to create pride in a long cultural tradition, precisely the role the pre war imperial institution had played' (1993: 68-69).

The idea of a new 'Age of Culture' (*bunka no jidai*) seems to have been a deliberate attempt by state authorities to publicly counter the effects of modernisation by returning to a Utopian past. In the theories which substantiate this idea of culture, the Japanese are pictured in terms of an organic metaphor as a uniquely organic society

where relations are characterised by harmonious ‘face-to-face interaction’ (*aidagarashugi*). Aesthetic forms like the Zen arts are also imagined to be transmitted in such a direct and mystical fashion, through ‘Body-to-body’ communication (*haragei/ishindenshin*). But the Zen arts were no longer exclusively the only aesthetic forms to which these culture theories were being applied. Although the rhetoric of ‘Culture’ in the 1970s and 1980s evoked an alternative to, and a withdrawal from, the effects of modernisation, all of the activities included within its rubric relied (more or less) upon modern technologies and the networks of a mass society to persist and to be of value.

In the immediate post-war period, at a time of economic regeneration, there was little criticism of modernising policies and nothing like the nostalgic concerns which typified the intellectual responses to modernism in the Meiji period. Instead, the issue was about accounting for the war and making a break with it (Gluck 1993), and economic successes and technological innovations were celebrated and spoken of in terms of ‘Culture’. The consequence for academic theory of this process has been a spate of post-modern arguments which aim to reconcile the aesthetic forms of everyday modern life with ‘traditional’ (pre-modern) aesthetics, and end by talking as Roland Barthes does of Japan as an *‘Empire of Signs’* (1982). This is a problematic argument because it assumes, through a theory about aesthetics, that technology and culture in Japan are naturally reconciled to one another. Post-modern arguments ignore the ways in which, for example, intellectual debates about the effects of modernisation constantly reiterate the perception of a distorting effect on aesthetic values and ethical standards, even while at the same time being necessarily embedded in them. The historical complexity and contradiction of these discourses is lost in the post-modern notion of a synthesis of all modern, foreign elements.

When we look at the Zen arts as aesthetic forms, on the one hand they resist and withdraw from the effects of modernisation, but on the other hand they positively embrace them. I referred earlier to modernisation as three processes - urbanism, capitalism and commodification, and suggested that ideas about the Zen arts were

embedded in each of these. Urbanism, for example, led directly to lifestyles which could accommodate the time and space needed to take part in 'leisurely' (*reja*) pursuits. Without the system of 'mass' (*masu*) events, such as arts fairs and the rise of the 'Department store' (*Depāto*) in the cities, which celebrated consumer lifestyles, the idea of the Zen arts as 'Art' would have been hard to sustain in the popular imagination.

The professionalisation of the arts through their inclusion in state education programmes and patronage by large industrial companies, made it possible for practitioners to develop their skills and disseminate their knowledge. The publishing revolution of the 1950s with the rise in popularity of new weekly magazines and 'comics' (*manga*), brought the ideas and images of the Zen arts to regular public attention. This process was enhanced by new visual media, including television, cinema and advertising, all of which have been utilised by the organisations which represent the Zen arts. Finally, there is the huge expansion in the commodification of objects associated with the Zen arts, a recognition that as Gluck has noted, the past 'sells' (1993: 69).

This history of commodification began with the collection and trade in tea utensils in the late Tokugawa and Meiji periods, and has continued with the mass production and advertisement of almost every object associated with practice. As a process which manifests the aesthetic values of the Zen arts in concrete forms, commodification has now reached a new level (its zenith?) as items are sold with no relation at all to practice.

The irony, and the contradiction of the Zen arts, is that as aesthetic forms of Japanese culture they have been forced to bear the burden of difference from modernisation, evoking the exoticism of an imagined past, even while they are so deeply embedded in it. In section two of this chapter, I will describe examples of the way in which this idea of culture as aesthetic form is exhibited in commodity and visual forms, to



demonstrate how deliberately they are constructed, and yet at the same time how creatively they can be used.

## **Section II:     Aesthetic value as commodity form and visual medium.**

Part of the attraction of practising *Chadō* has always been to appreciate the utensils as ‘famous objects’ (*meibutsu*), each with a distinctive and often personalised history. Personalising the objects used in *Chadō* began as early as the Heian period. The names given to items like tea caddies, for example, could belong to the owner, or be based on other criteria such as the region where he lived, or denote the aesthetic properties of the object (Guth 1993: 44-45). During the regular practice of *Chadō* these objects are arranged so they can be appreciated in the ‘alcove’ (*tokonoma*), ‘staggered shelves’ (*chigai dana*), and ‘utensil stand’ (*daisu*). Some items are held in such high regard that their history is recorded in catalogues and diaries (Brown 1997: 68-69) and form the basis for special tea events.<sup>10</sup> At one level of analysis, the personal nature and aesthetic qualities of these objects reflected their use within *Chadō* itself; but on another level, it allowed social prestige and ultimately economic power to accrue to the owner, subsuming its use value.

The art market, created through the activities of men such as Masuda Takashi, boomed in the Taishō era, and foreigners and wealthy industrialists vied with each other to possess, and in a sense to be possessed by, these objects. About this, Guth has remarked, ‘In *chanoyu* where objects acquire value only in as much as they have the power to evoke associations with people and places, making faithful copies of famous tea wares in the style of a particular artist or to the taste of a particular teamaster insures that traditional techniques are passed from one generation to the

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<sup>10</sup> From the Muromachi period onwards, tea gatherings have often been the occasion for the display of such *meibutsu* utensils, as a visible reflection of the wealth and prestige of their owner. One of the most famous of such gatherings was the Grand Kitano tea event hosted by the general Hideyoshi Toyotomi at the Kitano Shrine in Kyoto in 1587.

next, and by the same token, that something of the spiritual aura<sup>11</sup> of the original is preserved for posterity' (Guth 1993). The commodification of tea utensils as items for trade does not mean that they necessarily lose this 'spiritual aura', only that it is displaced onto other properties of the object which do not pertain directly to its use value, such as its visual characteristics. They are never defined by and desired for their commodity value alone, for these are items with personal and aesthetic qualities that give the owner something to be possessed by. Put plainly, as goods, these items mark aesthetic as well as social categories (Douglas & Isherwood 1979).

The risk with this kind of analysis is that we treat the economic value of these objects, which creates and marks social categories, as a form of 'commodity fetishism', discarding its use value (or as Marx would put it, discarding the social character of men's labour). The value of these items, as aesthetic forms to be used in the Zen arts, should not only appear as a characteristic of their commodity value. However, the fact that many of the objects used in *Chadō* today are mass-produced does not altogether disqualify them from retaining their value as aesthetic forms. What we have in the use of tea objects historically and today, is a form of what Brian Moeran calls 'honorific consumption'. Moeran borrows this term from Thorstein Veblen (1899) and uses it as I shall, to mean the value people place on objects not widely available and comparatively expensive, because of their specialised use (1997: 214-215). The concept of honorific consumption allows us to look at the use of tea objects as an example of individual, creative use, and also as a reflection of the social constraints of style.

This concept is also evident in the manner that members of *Shorinji Kempo* clothe themselves for practice. One way for practitioners to make a visual display of their social and technical progress is through the choice of a particular style of uniform, (*dogi*) and 'belt' (*obi*). Both items of clothing are prescribed, and like the badge worn on the front of the uniform, indicate membership, but they can also verify the creativity of the individual who wears them. Any practitioner, irrespective of rank can

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<sup>11</sup> My emphasis.

have their name put onto their *dogi*. It is a service offered by all of the three companies which manufacture and sell equipment specifically for *Shorinji Kempo* practice. The name of the practitioner can be sewn onto the neck lapel, lower front seam of the jacket, and the waist band of the trousers. There is a choice of Chinese (*Kanji*) *Hiragana* or *Katakana* characters (and English for foreigners).<sup>12</sup> The only other place where an individual's name may be displayed is on their black belt, when they have achieved that rank, and a number of stylistic combinations are possible. Initially, there is a choice of length, thickness, width and material for the belt. After this, it is possible to have one or two lines of writing stitched into the belt. These can be the name of the association, '*Shorinji Kempo*', one's own grade and/or one's name. Finally, all of the above come in a variety of colours; gold is still the most common, followed by silver and white, but red, green, and blue are also possible. Matching the type of belt, lettering and colour to oneself is never an arbitrary decision because in the training environment how one appears can be as important as how one acts. There is always a pressure to conform, but also a pressure to be equal to one's image, and therefore choice reflects some level of creative self-awareness.

On every occasion that a training seminar takes place at the *Shorinji Kempo* headquarters on Shikoku island, the shops selling training items and gifts are busy with visiting practitioners. The cost of items is always an important consideration, but many practitioners are also often guided in their choice of what to buy by current trends, in particular the observation or reports of what famous and skilful teachers may be wearing and the relationship of these combinations to their own self-image.

The question we might ask of these self-conscious decisions, in choosing a style of dress or a particular kind of tea object, is reminiscent of the discussion about mimesis and the embodied copying of technique and aesthetic forms in chapter four, 'How much of a copy does a copy have to be to have an effect on what it is a copy of?' (Taussig 1993: 51). Like the repertoire of techniques, clothing and *Chadō* utensils

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<sup>12</sup> *Hiragana* is used for Japanese words for which *Kanji* cannot easily be provided. *Katakana* is the writing system used for transcribing foreign loan words.

take their power from the idea of culture as aesthetic form. As aesthetic forms in a modern world of mass produced imitations and circulating images, a tea bowl and a black belt can constitute a copy on the basis of conforming to visual principles. The social world of production has made similarity to a particular image an object of desire. As copies of aesthetic form, a tea bowl and black belt have become objects to possess and to be possessed by. But the mimetic faculty is also a very ambiguous and complex power. By means of a visual image for example, it may be able to represent authenticity in the Zen arts (culture as aesthetic form), but the same power can distort individual experience and tends to hide its constructed nature.

The lives of practitioners of the Zen arts today are saturated with images outside of the training environment, which romanticise, parody, and may even falsify, the idea of what they are doing. The re-fashioned aesthetic forms of the Zen arts are visible everywhere, from mainstream cinema to television commercials and 'comic' books (*manga*). There are exigencies peculiar to all of these media - cinema, advertising and cartoon animation - which may affect the content of what is transmitted. There is for example a comic book (see Fig.5) devoted to *Chadō* which is designed to entertain as well as to instruct. The images used in all these media are also selective, obeying a separate logic even as they are aestheticised. We saw this earlier in the way the body was visualised in training manuals as a mechanism for skilful performance; although representations of the body of a Zen arts practitioner are in fact more widespread and less specialised than these textbooks and videos. On the popular representations of the body in Japan, John Clammer has argued that, 'The media then are not concerned with the pure aesthetics of the body, but with the exploitation of what is indeed an aesthetic canon for largely (however elegantly disguised) commercial ends. Commodity aesthetics reigns in other words' (1978: 112). Although I take issue with the strength of this statement which talks of 'exploitation' and the 'reign' of commodity aesthetics, Clammer does identify an important concern. The concern is that these media representations may manipulate those qualities of the body which arise out of its use as an aesthetic form and which constitute its experience of

performance. Commodity aesthetics may suppress these embodied experiences and aesthetic qualities, but at the same time they may also expand them in other directions.

The film version of Doshin So's life the founder of *Shorinji Kempo*, does just this, re-fashioning the man as a character in line with other folk heroes. Significantly, this film was made in the 1970s with the full backing of the *Shorinji Kempo* organisation, and featured real practitioners and locations. Its lead star was a skilled *Shorinji Kempo* practitioner and was advised during the making of the film by Doshin So himself. If the image of *Shorinji Kempo* was being exploited by its makers, fitting it into a certain kind of film genre, it was also being manipulated by the *Shorinji Kempo* organisation, or at least being made knowingly. The film draws together a number of well-known and important themes, to present an image of *Shorinji Kempo* that fits into a widely familiar genre of Japanese film, associated particularly with the period of resurgent nationalism in the 1970s.

At the very beginning of the film, over the title credits, the official history of *Shorinji Kempo* is retold in a series of dramatic stills and a voice-over. *Shorinji Kempo* is connected to an established tradition of *Budō/Bushidō* and *Shugyō* in Japan. The story itself begins with the character Doshin So, who appears as a lonely if self-assured figure of fearsome fighting ability. He is constantly coming across situations and meeting challenges which require him to use his skills, and at times the film is extremely violent. One sequence which is repeated throughout the film shows Doshin So emerging from the shadows with a hat pulled low so that his face is partly obscured. He speaks with a deep voice and uses particularly strong and masculine forms of speech. The hard, manly image fits a generic type of Samurai hero well known in Japanese storytelling and movie-making as *koha*, whose characteristics Ian Buruma describes as, 'stoicism' (*stoicizumu*), meaning a fondness of hardship and a horror of sex, and purity coupled with a fiery temper. The *koha* hero has to prove his manhood over and over again in fights' (1984: 143).

The *koha* hero is someone like the legendary swordsman Musashi Miyamoto whose exploits are presented in popular form as 'the victory of spirit over material things' (*seishin shugi*). These Samurai heroes are often described as 'nihilists' (*nihirsuto*), someone who has no social ties or responsibilities, but is singleminded in their pursuit of 'the Way'. But Doshin So's character is more complex and sympathetic than this, for a large part of the film also tells of his compassion and acts of kindness towards women, children and the socially downtrodden. The message is that those who practise *Shorinji Kempo* take their social responsibilities seriously and demonstrate pious respect for family (at one moment we see Doshin So engaged in self-reflection at his mother's grave). In order to be effective at fulfilling these responsibilities, it is necessary to 'discipline heart and mind' (*Ken Zen ichinyō*) through *Shorinji Kempo* training.

There are two other themes in this film which are part of the Samurai film or *koha* genre, but also particular to the self-image of *Shorinji Kempo* at this time. Firstly, there is an incipient nationalism which is displayed early on, through Doshin So's experiences of the war in Manchuria, and also evident in a later scene, where he fights with soldiers of the American occupation forces. Added to this, is a strong anti-modernist theme in the scenes of urban deprivation and corruption, culminating in rather grotesque parodies of jazz clubs and gangsters (*yakuza*). In part, these images are just parodies and have to be seen within the context of a certain kind of film that aims to be a popular form of entertainment. This is an important issue, for there is a point at which a media representation such as this film, even if it is sanctioned and supported by the organisation in question, ceases to be culture as aesthetic form and becomes commodity as aesthetic form. I believe we can maintain the distinction between cultural and commodity aesthetic, along with the integrity of the film as a cultural document, as long as we accept that there is a perception among Japanese of a difference between the representation of culture (through an aesthetic medium like film) and a culture of representation (the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts). This film is of the former category, a popular representation of a 'Way of Art' (*geidō*), but resists being an articulation of 'Popular Culture' (*asobi no seishin*).



Evidence of this is the nationalist and anti-modern message in the film, which continually refers back to types and genres of Japanese history and folklore, distinguishing *Shorinji Kempo* from the modern and the foreign, even while ironically using such a contemporary technology to do so. This distinction continues to be evoked and displaced in more contemporary media representations of *Shorinji Kempo*, where the nature of their construction is not obscured by the contingencies of a Japanese film genre.

A video officially commissioned and made for the *Shorinji Kempo* organisation to record its fortieth anniversary celebrations in 1988 reflects significant changes in its self-image, and in the political climate since the earlier film version appeared. The video is not a narrative like the film, and can only be described by the various elements it contains.

The anniversary celebration, which took place in the *Nippon Budōkan*, a large facility specifically for the practice of *Budō*, opens with a performance by a classical Chinese theatre troupe. Like the introduction to the *Shorinji Kempo* movie, but in an even more direct fashion, this was a clear attempt to link *Shorinji Kempo* together with Japan's other cultural traditions and establish its historical authenticity. What followed though was quite different from this kind of retrospection. As the *Shorinji Kempo* performers assembled on stage, a large saucer-shaped UFO complete with flashing lights, descended slowly from the roof. Quite abruptly a shout went up from the performers arranged beneath and as they gazed upwards at the object, hands outstretched as if in supplication, the UFO slowly rose up towards the roof.

For those who were there at the event or who have seen it since on video tape, the UFO has provoked a mixture of reactions. They range from feigned ignorance to amusement and disbelief. Quite plainly, a lot of trouble had been spent constructing this object and incorporating it into the celebrations. I want to suggest that the UFO is part of a shift in the self-image and presentation of *Shorinji Kempo*, and indeed in

the other Zen arts as well, which now look abroad and to the future, rather than constantly evoke the past. The UFO was not an isolated event in the celebration, throughout which elements of the foreign and the modern were positively embraced. All of the demonstrations of technique were choreographed to the accompaniment of a laser light show and digital music. The finale involved two professional singers, one an American from Los Angeles and the other a Japanese, neither of whom practised *Shorinji Kempo*, walking together onto the main stage and singing the new anthem, half in English and half in Japanese. The song, titled '*Deep within each Man*' is an anthem for peace and international fellowship through the collective practice of *Shorinji Kempo*.

The video, like the event itself, is a montage of different elements, which does not attempt to hide its fabrication. It does not make any claim to be a natural representation of the *Shorinji Kempo* experience, as did the film version of Doshin So's life. What the video does is herald a shift of emphasis away from themes of nationalism and anti-modernism towards 'Internationalisation' (*kokusaika*), the dominant political discourse of the last ten years in Japan.

In one of the most recent television documentaries about *Shorinji Kempo*, made by NHK (the most respected national broadcasting network in Japan) in 1992, the theme of 'Internationalism' features predominantly. Images of the foreign are less ambiguous than the UFO model, for practitioners from all over the world are interviewed and invited to speak for themselves about their own involvement in *Shorinji Kempo*, and their impressions of Japan. There is an emphasis in the documentary on the sheer diversity of foreigners who practise, including an American executive for the Walt Disney Corporation, and a Russian medical researcher. This international emphasis is repeated in a promotional video for the *Urasenke* tea foundation which shows *Chadō* being performed in places as distant as a Catholic Church in Peru. Themes of the past which emphasise the national cultural tradition within which these Zen arts claim to be grounded are still present in these recent media versions, but not foregrounded as they used to be. The treatment of *Shorinji*

*Kempo* within Japan in the NHK documentary, centres mostly on its incorporation within school and university programmes of education. Old and famous teachers appear in the documentary, together with evocative images of Buddhist symbols, like the 'reverse swastika symbol' (*manji*), but they are dislocated images, not part of a narrative version that could connect them directly to a nationalist discourse.

The point I am making here is that there are no distinct boundaries in these recent media versions between the representation of the foreign and of the past, and this reflects current social trends. Many of the present generation of Japanese who come to practise the Zen arts are unfamiliar with their pre-war history and often regard these kinds of activities as strange and exotic, as much so as foreign beliefs and practices once used to be. This generation of the 1980s are the 'New Japanese' (*shinjin rui* or *shin nihonjin*), of whose attitude to 'Culture' it has been said, 'performance and novelty outweigh the concern for status and quality which occupied the previous post war generations' (Ivy 1995: 54-55). They are part of the 'profligate age' (*hōtō eiji*) who are taken with the 'manners and customs' (*fūzoku*) of Taishō era mass culture, including activities like the Zen arts. For this generation the past has become a foreign country, or more precisely 'Japan is a foreign country' (*Nihon wa gaikoku desu*).

This new perception of the Zen arts as a vehicle for internationalism has been spread through modern communications media like television and cinema. They have profoundly affected the circulation and consequently the quality of the idea of culture as aesthetic form, which distinguishes the Zen arts. This idea is based on a very focused transmission of culture, taught and learnt physically and socially in space and time. The increased mobility and flexibility of this idea, when presented through the new media, has extended the physical and social distances of formal practice of the Zen arts, having a potentially disembedding and diluting effect. Such an effect is evident in the evocation of principles previously connected only with actual practice to mass cultural forms. I examined this earlier, noting Marilyn Ivy's discussion of the way in which the advertising campaign for Japan's National Railways, 'Discover

Japan', presented travel as a nostalgic return to one's origins, a spiritual journey of self-discovery or 'pilgrimage' (*tabi*) (ibid: 36). Later in 1984 this campaign was replaced by 'Exotic Japan' which coincided with a boom in 'nostalgia products' (*nostaruji shōhin*) and 'nostalgic advertisements' (*nostaruji kōkoku*). The differences between these two campaigns 'Discover Japan' and 'Exotic Japan' which Ivy identifies are the differences between the movie and the NHK documentary on *Shorinji Kempo*: 'In the savvy rhetorical and textual strategies of Exotic Japan, however, one does not sense the anguished sorting out of self and other that occupies the vast Japanese literature on national character, although its explicit theme is (once again) the Japanese thing. Instead, there is a distancing, as it encourages Japanese to play with all differentiations without guilt or concern. Exotic Japan presents Japanese differences from and identity with both the Occident and the Orient as a matter of style' (ibid: 51). In one of the most recent examples of advertising reinventing the past as 'exotic', the idea of *dō* which is central to all the Zen arts has become a matter not so much of 'style', but of taste, and is quite literally consumable.

Instant noodles do not yet have the same kind of privileged status as the Zen arts, but as the 'Taste of the World' are immediately recognisable both within and outside Japan. As the forerunners of Japan's 'Instant Culture', there is a movement in Japan to elevate potted noodles to a great deal more than just a hot snack. Borrowing heavily and with a good deal of irony from ideas about the Zen arts, the suffix *dō* has been attached, giving immediate status to *ramendō* as the 'Way of Noodles'. The Nisshin Food Products Co., Japan's top manufacturer of instant noodles, has set up a group to 'study the way of noodles'. The group has even written a book titled *Fuden no Shō* a parody of the fifteenth century text *Kadenshō* ('*The quintessence of Nō*'). According to the parody, eating noodles should be an aesthetic experience in which the various ingredients are appreciated for their symbolic value. It is a message which does not exclude the foreigner, for consumers are also invited as members of 'the global noodle families' to partake in the experience.

The conditions that make this advertisement possible are the conditions of modernisation and a mass society, but what makes it effective and compelling is its parody of the idea of culture as aesthetic form. This idea of differences in aesthetic form between 'High Culture' and 'Low Culture' between the past and the present, between Japan and the World is not only a consequence of post-Meiji modernisation, but also of much older notions like 'ways of fun' (*dōraku*). Examples of *dōraku* are the *ukiyo-e* prints of the Edo period which parody *Chadō* (Brown 1997: 179). They demonstrate that playing with aesthetic forms is older than post-modernism; but this has not prevented some commentators from arguing that parodies of aesthetic forms such as we find in *ramendō* are evidence that Japan is and always has been post modern. Roland Barthes has famously argued that the use made by the Japanese in so many varied fields of activity, of aesthetic values like 'nothingness' (*mu*), is evidence that Japanese Culture is a de-centered '*Empire of Signs*' (1970). Another post-structuralist commentator, Robert Magliola, has asserted that the aestheticism of the Zen arts operates entirely according to the logic of Derridean differential 'trace', 'Buddhists in the Nagarjunist tradition can function as productive, often outstanding members of society ... They can savour and create the exquisitely esthetic (think of Zen painting, ceramics, gardens, poetry); yet, I argue, they are doing all this as trace, as indeed Derridean trace!' (Magliola 1984: 89). The application of these semiotic theories to Zen aesthetics ends up with a, 'post-modern vision of Japan as a de-centered text wherein each sign is emptied into a chain of differential traces and floating signifiers - without closure, without origin and without a privileged centre' (Odin 1995: 19).

The problem with the post-modern thesis is that by treating the Zen arts as de-centered and dislocating it is overlooking the scholarly history out of which the idea of culture as aesthetic form emerged. It ends up as Asada Akira (1983) has pointed out, reinforcing the traditionalist version of Japanese Culture as aesthetic form. A more useful way to think of aestheticism in the Zen arts, one which avoids the problematic mystification and obfuscation of much of post-modernist writing, is the Japanese novelist and Nobel Prize winner Kenzaburō Ōe's notion of 'ambiguity'. In

1993, a generation after Kawabata's influential speech, Oe Kenzaburo, in a direct and critical reference to Kawabata, titled his Nobel acceptance speech, '*Japan the Dubious and Myself*'. Oe's less than celebratory vision of Japan undermines the idea that the nation is best represented by an aesthetic tradition. He accuses Kawabata - and by extension other popular authors like Mishima Yukio, Sōseki Natsume and Abe Kōbō - of being vague, 'ambiguous' (*aimai-na*) and therefore of a 'culturally conditioned failure to come to terms with the real world' (quoted in Fu & Heine 1995: ix). According to Ōe, the Japan which Kawabata evokes does not exist, 'He was talking only to the fruit of his imagination, his apparition of beauty. And by doing so he severed all ties with all living souls' (ibid: viii). For Ōe, the whole notion of Tradition is a modern invention. Although, as we have seen, this is not the case historically, it is precisely this ambiguity, the contradictory and sometimes ironic nature of the Zen arts as aesthetic form, which can make them such a compelling version of Japanese culture and nationhood.



## Chapter 8

### Cracking Culture

What is a correct understanding of the Zen Arts? How is it to be identified and demonstrated? By its structural aspects, by its register of aesthetic values, or through the experience of participants? In this thesis I have used ethnography and history to fashion an account which stresses plurality and to argue against the notion of a singular, 'authentic' version of the Zen arts. This account has aimed to articulate some of the experiences of participants and the contingencies of different contexts, while at the same time recognising that the most powerful idea of authenticity, that which consistently represents the practice and experience of practitioners, is the idea of Culture as aesthetic form. This idea of authenticity is rooted in a rhetoric of 'pure experience' and discourses about Japanese cultural uniqueness. In the last chapter, I demonstrated that the singularity and originality of authenticity has been brought into question by the aesthetic and economic forces of mass culture which accentuate re-enactment (films for example) and repetition (copies of valued objects).

For some post-modern commentators, the synthesising of the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts with those of modernisation is itself a representation of the 'authentic' in Japanese Culture. The opposite position suggests that mass cultural forms such as visual media, hide and obscure the 'true' sensory and social nature of experience in the Zen arts. I want to suggest that a participant's understanding of the Zen arts is neither the post-modern valorisation of aesthetic form as a mode of discourse, nor the deconstruction or 'cracking' of its surface appearances as textual and visual forms. It is not possible to make a clear distinction between the authenticity of an aesthetic original and the authenticity of its copy, when the culture of the Zen arts is about reproduction and repetition as a valued cultural aesthetic.

For participating individuals, the idea of culture as aesthetic form is an important means for enhancing experience and authenticating practice. Authenticity, however is also located in mass cultural forms which re-present the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts and give participants the opportunity and means to think about practice as a way of both accruing 'cultural capital' and 'distinction', and as the 'consumption' of a valued commodity.

The post-war history of the Zen arts suggests the attribution of 'Culture' be ascribed to two generalised types of practitioners. One comprises practitioners who may be Japanese or foreign but in their attitudes to practice consistently reject modernisation and withdraw into the interiorized 'authentic' space of a *dōjō/chashitsu* and the 'pure experience' of aesthetic form. The other involves those who may or may not reject mass cultural forms but find authenticity in the fact of being a Japanese participant, rather than a foreigner; a culturally relativist position, typically articulated as a form of cultural nationalism.

In place of reiterating what is Japanese about the Zen arts, I have wanted to ask why, how, for whom, and in what form, cultural authenticity becomes an issue. Rather than examining the Zen arts so as to incorporate them into the anthropological literature on ritual or Japanese philosophy, for example, I have looked at an idea of the Zen arts - the idea of Culture as aesthetic form - in relation to the conditions of its social and physical formation by individuals, and linked this with social and political processes of the past and present.

Questions of authenticity have been essential to Zen and to the Zen arts since their formation in the medieval era. This was made clear in the last chapter, through a thematic history of the various ways that the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts are connected to broader questions of politics and commercialism. The aesthetic terms may change over time, and have various usages, *miyabi*, *mono no aware*, *iki*, *satori*, *junsui keiken*, *tōyōteki mu*, but for the power to represent cultural authenticity, they are all connected in some form or another to political discourses and commercial

concerns. We saw the strongest version of this process in the construction of theories to make the Zen arts a form of 'national aesthetics'.

However, does this kind of connection constitute all the conditions necessary to represent authenticity in the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts? As aesthetic forms which are practised, I have demonstrated that there is a significant disparity between aesthetic quality and embodied experience. Added to this, the historical survey showed a fundamental ambiguity and contradiction at the very heart of the idea of the Zen arts as aesthetic forms. They have the capacity to express a particular ideological or commodity value, but they also continually exhibit the capacity to be a means of reclusion, withdrawal, and criticism of the centre of power. This is not only the consequence of their involvement in debates about the effects of modernity but part of the very logic of the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts. It is a logic which, as Pincus says of Kuki Shūzō's aesthetic of *iki*, 'pictures a world awash with meaning, a world in which bodies, gestures and artefacts are transmuted into signs of lived experience and abiding value. A gesture, a glance, a colour, or a line all 'press a personality and narrate the experiences of a past' (1996: 189).

As we look at the different temporal and spatial contexts of the Zen arts we see that authenticity can be applied to a wide range of phenomena - aesthetic terms, physical forms (*kata*), visual images, objects like a *kimono*, tea bowl or belt; a structured set of relationships to a person (*sensei*) and place (*dōjō/chashitsu*), and a code of conduct (*reigi*). One of the key problems in identifying authenticity in Zen and the Zen arts is that it can be expressed in so many different ways. As Kenneth Kraft has pointed out in his discussion of the concept of authenticity in the language of Zen, 'a Sino-Japanese character or compound often can function as a noun, adjective or verb, just as English has authenticity, authentication, authentic and authenticate ... In the quotation, "Is X's Zen authentic?" X can be replaced by a person, a temple, a text, a lineage, a doctrinal tenet, a type of practice, a style of poetry and so on. Though

many things can be described as 'authentically Zen' there may no be one single criterion that will fit all cases' (1992: 87).<sup>1</sup>

There may not be a single criterion for a correct understanding of the Zen arts, but as I have suggested earlier, one way of dealing with this complexity is through the logic of mimesis. This is not mimesis as pure imitation, holding a mirror up to nature, because if that were the case the criteria for authentication would be less unruly and more consistent; it is a notion of mimesis as a creative and inventive act which projects onto and illuminates the world. The metaphor, but not the distinction between '*The Mirror and the Lamp*' (1953) which M.H. Abrams has employed to distinguish mimesis from other forms of criticism is useful here. Mimesis in the Zen Arts is both a mirror-imitation and a lamp-creation, as explanations of one concept of authenticity in Zen - 'enlightenment' - make clear, 'In the ch'an/Zen tradition some of the oldest ways of expressing enlightenment were metaphoric: a mirror free of dust, the dispersal of clouds, the bright flame of a lamp and so on' (Kraft 1992: 88).

As a conclusion to this thesis, I will describe three situations where the Zen arts are performed and the criteria for authenticity are different. I want to highlight the way in which the various representative functions of the Zen arts are mixed up with the identities of practitioners, in order to suggest that it is hard to talk to practitioners or about their experiences, without talking about representations. These representations find their way into practitioners lives via mimesis, and are articulated in ways which reflect individual concerns and the impact of particular ideologies and processes of modernisation. Mimesis therefore, reflects the self-consciousness of the individual who is doing the adapting, the constraints upon them, and the fact that as aesthetic forms these representations are both adaptable and constraining. Initially, I will describe a situation and the means by which a performance of one of the Zen arts can become a representation of national identity.

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<sup>1</sup> This is also a point made by Faure (1991 and 1993).

The bright, new, and totally modern 'Kansai International Airport', built in the bay of Osaka, is not the first place one expects to find an intimate encounter with the Zen Arts or with 'Traditional' Japan. However, soon after the opening of the airport in 1995, incoming visitors and Japanese returnees exiting the arrival lounge were confronted by a long, low wooden table covered in a red cloth and two or three *kimono*-clad women ready to serve green tea in the traditional manner. As new arrivees (both Japanese and foreign) filed past, they were invited to take part in an abbreviated version of *Chadō*, before continuing with their journeys. They removed their shoes, knelt down on the red cloth, and watched as tea was prepared.

The event only takes a few minutes, but the guests often remembered and described to me how they had found themselves attracted by the attention to detail which is characteristic of the spectacle. The slow, measured gestures of the host are a contrast, often a welcome one, to the hustle and bustle of the airport surroundings. The opulence of the *kimono* worn by the host, the sweet taste of the cakes, and the aroma of the green tea are aspects of a sensory experience which can evoke a time and space altogether different from the present. It is also an experience of intimacy, since within this small space and for this short time the efforts of the host are centred entirely on the creation of a bowl of tea for the guests. It is engaging to be the focus of so much care and attention, and after receiving and drinking the tea the guests usually proffered sincere words of appreciation. This event is not a statement of a national ideology; the mode of communication is sensory, and the aesthetic vocabulary used to describe these sensations too ambiguous for any ideological statement to be coherent. When *Chadō* is performed in these kinds of surroundings, it evokes an idea of the nation that can appeal to individuals personally, and simultaneously be a vivid public representation. As a small-scale enactment of aesthetic form, it is only by retaining the intimate and engaging qualities of *Chadō* that participants can be made to feel they are part of the public representation of an imagined tradition. The combination of private intimacy and public spectacle, in a space that could be transferred anywhere and acknowledged by almost anyone, makes *Chadō* a universally compelling and non-contentious version of national identity.

As forms of nationalism in a place such as an airport, the Zen arts do not constitute a doctrine or ideology *per se*, so much as evoke what Anthony Smith calls a 'strong and widely diffused consciousness of belonging' (1982: 167-169). The cogency and effect of this form of aesthetic nationalism is its symbolic evocation of a nationalist sentiment. Separated from the contexts and institutions where aesthetic forms are manifested at the level of regular practice, they become an idiom by which a national identity can be fostered and expressed.

Milieux like modern airports which are familiar on an international scale, are filled with possibilities for the kind of mobile, small-scale exhibition of national identity which it is possible for *Chadō* to represent. 'Airport art' has been discussed by Nelson Graburn (1976: 5) as the expression of a kind of symbolic boundary marking differences with the outside world, and at the same time reinforcing an internal national identity. It has always been at events where there is contact with foreigners, such as the 'Great Exhibitions' and 'World Fairs' of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century, that aesthetic forms like the Zen arts are the subject of national displays.<sup>2</sup> Today, the opportunities for such national displays are more various and perhaps more ambiguous as the decision about what elements to include and how to arrange them must reconcile a range of political and commercial concerns. These concerns include a perception of the incompatibility of traditional forms of culture with modern technologies. The adaptability, mobility and polysemy of the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts make them well suited for such occasions.

As Penelope Harvey has noted in her anthropological study of the 1992 World Exposition in Seville, the question for the Japanese representatives of the company Fujitsu who were a central feature of the Japan display was not Tradition or Technology, but both of these. Their display emphasised tradition and was explained not as a desire to exploit a relationship between Japan and Fujitsu, but as a means of

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<sup>2</sup> Japan participated in several of the exhibitions held between 1862 and 1910 and the arts always featured prominently (Guth 1993).



humanising their technology, even if it confounded the expectations of visitors, ‘They were not serving the partial interests of particular constituencies, nor were they engaged in the nightmares of modernist technological development, developments in which technology stood in opposition to art, replacing and working against human and spiritual values’ (1996: 120).

In practical terms, the question for casual participants at public events and International Fairs, or indeed for regular practitioners is not what is the authentic Zen art, but rather what are the Zen arts that are good for selling technology, representing Japanese culture, and encouraging tourism? It is a question which the women whom I met one New Year’s day morning at the Bentenchō training site in Osaka understood clearly.

There were only five of us who assembled to practice *Chadō* that morning. This was a special occasion, and attendance was limited to those who had arranged with the teacher some time previously for their participation or, like me, had been invited. To take part in this event, which would include a special meal (*shojin ryōri*) and the chance to dress up in *kimono*, was a rare opportunity and there was some happy anticipation in the conversation among the waiting guests. All of the participants, besides myself and the senior student who would act as host, were women, known to one another through their regular practice at the training centre. Unlike normal practice sessions, where conversation often touched on everyday and even personal matters, here everybody’s attention was deliberately focused on the details of the event. The woman who would act as main guest checked and joked with her friends about the correct responses she must remember to deliver to the host. Before we began, there was some talk of what celebrations had been attended the night before on New Year’s eve, and of impending responsibilities to family and friends that afternoon. Once we entered the tea room and its serene and intimate atmosphere, the only talk was about the event itself. Getting the form and order of the procedure correct was important in order to feel involved in something of significance. It

demonstrated an awareness of one's part in a collective effort, and a sensibility for fine things.

All of the best utensils were in use and on display on this occasion, and the host had spent most of the night before carefully preparing the food we would eat. Knowing this, and being constantly aware of one's role and responsibility intensified the quality of the experience. All of the women spoke to me afterwards of how therapeutic the experience had been; how 'stress'-free they had felt. Time seemed to slow down, said one woman, and she had quite forgotten about all the household chores she would have to go back and do at home that afternoon.

Even if there were certain physical discomforts at sitting for so long (two hours) in one position and occasional mistakes or confusion about what to do next, they were passed over or became the subject of a gentle humour. Taking part in such an event was, said the participants, a respite and a temporary withdrawal from their family responsibilities as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, etc., and yet at the same time was a cultural affirmation of those same roles.

The word which kept reappearing to describe the event, particularly in connection with the objects used and the food consumed, was 'nostalgia' (*natsukashii koto*). No one could contemplate ever owning such objects themselves, or eating that kind of food regularly, but they already possessed a permanent version of the aesthetic value the food and objects represented, for at precise moments during the procedure when such objects had been used and when we had eaten, the guests had taken it in turns to pose and take photographs. This kind of visual record was not a substitute for the social and sensory experience of participation but an extension and a development of the desire to copy and possess the past as an aesthetic form or 'nostalgic thing' (*natsukashii mono*).

Even while the visual rendering of 'nostalgic things' retrieves and fixes the past in an image, at the same time it may also obscure and hide the conditions and aesthetic

value of their use. Within the terms of the idea of culture as aesthetic form, participation in the Zen arts may develop a desire for a rediscovery of the self and national identity. This is a retrieval which can slip over into the domain of nostalgia; however, the manner in which these most redemptive moments are captured and frozen in visual forms is antithetical to that ideal. The irony and contradiction of this perpetual sense of loss and retrieval is part of what it means to participate in the Zen arts today. It is an inherent ambiguity which allows for aesthetic value to take different forms. In this instance, it converges with a visual technology and also with individual concerns for a valid form of recuperation from the stress of modern living.

Unlike the staged versions of the *Chadō* at the airport, here in Bentenchō individual issues of the self such as family responsibilities (but also age, gender, occupation and social position) can intersect in more meaningful ways with ideas about the past and national identity. At Bentenchō, one participates with others who are familiar and part of a potentially nurturing atmosphere. It is an environment where it is possible to deal with personal concerns by withdrawing into the interiorised and intimate world of *Chadō*, if only for a few hours.

This personal attitude to participation is publicly legitimated by the articulation of social issues in a cultural form like codes (*reigi/kei*) of conduct; a form of sociality which is an aspect of the discourse on contemporary cultural nationalism in Japan. *Reigi/kei* are ethical and moral practices which are meaningful as everyday realities, and as national conventions. Kosaku Yoshino, in a recently published study of '*Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*' (1992), has noted that the sense of Japanese particularity which most Japanese identify with today is composed of essentially social and behavioural characteristics. It is not concerned so much with the expression of nationalism in terms of rhetorical language and the historical imagination.

My suggestion, in looking at these two different contexts, one an international airport, the other a small local training centre, is that it is not possible or desirable to choose

between a version of the Zen arts that is either a rhetorical version of national/cultural identity or a social identity articulated as a moral and ethical guide for living. Depending partly on context, both versions are possible, and in thinking of the Zen arts as a form of nationalism we might better depict them as what Orvar Löfgren (talking about nationalism in another context) has described as, 'an arena where different interests, loyalties and strategies are acted out. An arena where national is played off against, fused, contrasted or combined with other identities like age, gender, class and occupation' (1993: 191). In this arena, where various versions of the Zen arts' identities are constantly being played out and played off against each other, should we talk any longer of an essential authenticity for practitioners? It is important that we do, because practitioners have vested interests in such an idea, which may motivate their participation and validate their experience. What I have been concerned to do in this thesis is not deny the idea of an essential authenticity, but to refuse its simple equation with practitioners' identities, fixing them into cultural categories. It has been an exercise which qualifies and accredits my own partial and changing position.

I began this thesis with an outline of my own history of involvement in the Zen arts and the discrepancies between those experiences and official versions of participation. The subsequent investigation of the intersection of various physical and social realities with aesthetic discourses of past and present was designed to show how in the experiences of other practitioners as well, authenticity was negotiated as a standard different from purely aesthetic criteria.

By way of a conclusion to this thesis I want to explore my current position, as a teacher of *Shorinji Kempo* to members of the public in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. I will ask what the brief (ten year) history of my instigation and involvement in a form of inter-cultural exchange between Scotland and Japan can tell us about the dynamics of authenticity in the Zen arts. How have the standards and values of aesthetic form changed in their transposition to another country far away from Japan? What are the social mechanisms by which the value of different

individual interpretations of authenticity, including my own as teacher, have been negotiated? Finally, are there substantive differences between these processes and what I have already described in Japan?

A *Shorinji Kempo* branch was established in Edinburgh ten years ago, during the first term of my undergraduate career. The club has always been open to any member of the public, and has become a focal point for a small community of Edinburgh citizens. Most of the participants did not know each other before they began training, but have since come to regard each other as 'friends', rather than training partners. This social aspect of the club is highly valued. It is what almost all participants say motivated them to start training in this particular activity, and keeps them involved once they have begun. New students often remark that they would not normally have considered practising a martial art, but what impressed them was the sociable atmosphere. There is also a general awareness and understanding among members - and in a few cases it is quite detailed - of other martial arts and the differences between them and *Shorinji Kempo*. *Shorinji Kempo* is distinguishable by its claim to be a form of Zen training and by its technical system which is an unusual combination of both 'hard' (*gōhō*) and 'soft' (*jūhō*) techniques. Knowledge of the martial arts is available from a number of sources including books, television documentaries and video movies. However, none of this information can quite prepare the new student for being among the social community of practitioners at the local and practical level. The aesthetic ideal of *Shorinji Kempo* which emerges from its official history, philosophy and technical repertoire is hard to sustain unchanged, once it is grounded in social and embodied conditions.

It is possible, to a degree, to reconstruct and perpetuate that aesthetic ideal through the precise imitation and repetition of physical forms, and by observing the strictures of the *iemoto* structure of social relations. In doing so, there is a strong and widely held perception that practice will become an authentically Zen-like and authentically Japanese form. This perception is articulated in various texts and images, and was

reflected by my own attitude at the time I began teaching. It is what characterised the first few years of the Edinburgh club's training regime.

Approached in this orthodox way, *Shorinji Kempo* is what Arjun Appadurai has, in the context of describing the absorption of English cricket and its value system into Indian society, called a 'Hard Cultural Form': 'Hard Cultural forms are those that come with a set of links between values, meaning, and embodied practice, links that are difficult to break and hard to transform' (1995: 24). Appadurai shows how a 'hard cultural form' like cricket, associated with quintessential English values, was in time transformed by Indian society, such that its team structure could become a means for fostering communal religious identities (ibid: 31).

Over time, I have observed the same kind of transformation in Edinburgh, as the system of practice has been made to fit a succession of different venues and changing patterns of membership. Central to this process was my own experience, the result of time spent training in Japan. This added to the variety of different approaches to training from which it was possible for us to choose and create a distinctive Edinburgh variety of *Shorinji Kempo*.

Originally, when we first began training in Edinburgh, I had imitated my Japanese teacher, Mizuno Sensei, the head of *Shorinji Kempo* in Britain, in every detail, even down to the stunted English phrases he used while teaching. Copying well and repeatedly the correct physical forms was the predominant approach to training in Edinburgh, and one which drew respect and acclaim from other clubs and senior teachers. Our role models for imitation were expert practitioners like Mizuno Sensei, but also included the technical forms of teachers as they appeared to us in the photographic spreads of teaching manuals.

There were discrepancies between the form, style and attitude to practice of these different teachers, but not until I began travelling to Japan did they become viable



alternatives. In Japan, as I have described above, there was a much greater variety of locations and methods of practice, even within a single system like *Shorinji Kempo*.

Exposure to these reinterpretations of *Shorinji Kempo* methods, along with a developing physical ability to reproduce its different forms, gave me the opportunity to make changes in the Edinburgh club. What I did not expect, and could not foresee, was the way these evaluative assessments of the relative value of different forms of practice allowed for and may even have encouraged the mobilisation of powerful sentiments of belonging to the club. This sense of being a member of a group with a distinct identity was probably most quintessentially expressed as 'having the crack'. This phrase, used widely in the North of England and Scotland and Ireland is not peculiar to Edinburgh, but its use here did sum up the type of relationship which Edinburgh members collectively valued during the course of their training. It implied that in one's dealings with others, and particularly within any encounter or technical exchange there should be an ironic and dryly humorous attitude, an ability to always see the funny side.<sup>3</sup> This quality continues to be important, but has been re-negotiated since my return from fieldwork in Japan and encounter with Mori Sensei. His attitude to practice, which centred almost entirely on the value and function of technique alone, made me aware of just how relaxed and open the structure of the training environment could be. But as I discovered in trying to reproduce this approach, it relied almost wholly on the personality and skill of the teacher to engage participants and keep their energies constructively focused. Without the benefit of Mori's experience, expertise and sheer presence, the club began to lose coherence and direction in training, although with so much freedom to interact with each other the informal social aspect of the club thrived. What became rapidly apparent was the importance of a clear structure of practice and social relations for sustaining an idea of authenticity, the idea that practice was directed. These structures could be adapted to accommodate local and personal eccentricities, but to replace them entirely as I had tried with an imitation of Mori Sensei's version, was beyond my ability to sustain.

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<sup>3</sup> It is a type of humour, often self-deprecating, characterised by conversation and gossip in public houses - 'pubs'.

In the ten-year history of the negotiations and changes to *Shorinji Kempo* in Edinburgh, we had been constrained in three ways. Firstly, by the physical fact of the techniques which manipulate and shape the body of the practitioner in very particular ways. Secondly, by the knowledge and interpretation of the various aesthetic discourses which authenticated the practice of these techniques. Finally, by a concern for our approach to practice to be distinctive by 'having the crack'.

An aesthetic form like *Shorinji Kempo* can bear many different adaptations and wherever they are practised may become the object of national/cultural, as well as local, elaboration. Therefore, whenever we try to explain our own or others' involvements in these aesthetic forms, sooner or later we run into mystification. Attempting to deconstruct and contextualise the mystification runs the risk of ignoring the vested interests of participants in particular ideas.

There are objective criteria for attributing aesthetic value and cultural authenticity to the physical acts and material forms that substantiate the Zen arts; but embodied experience and local social relations as well as modern institutions, technologies and commercial values cross-cut and refigure these distinctions. So the attribution of the aesthetic criteria of authenticity depends on the negotiations within each social community of practitioners, and ultimately each individual, about where value resides. The definition of the authenticity of *Shorinji Kempo* practice in Edinburgh, has been the result of individual choice and negotiation among a community of practitioners. As Brian Spooner has said in examining the issues of the authenticity of Oriental carpets, 'We look for authenticity according to our cultural concepts not theirs, authenticity is our cultural choice' (1986: 223).

The idea of culture as aesthetic form cannot explain on its own our concern for authenticity. The concept of authenticity in the Zen arts belongs particularly to the modern period and the perception of a vanishing Utopian world of the senses that must be reclaimed and maintained. By looking at the intellectual construction of an

idea of culture as aesthetic form in historical movements such as the reaction to modernisation in the Japanese Meiji period, we have been able to recognise its connection with similar movements in the West. On this basis, intercultural understanding is possible through a form like the Zen arts, not because of the common roots of nationalist discourses and *Japonisme* in anti-modernist Romantic idealism, but because the Zen arts are not and have never been 'Culture'-bound, but are always being re-negotiated.

Throughout the history of the Zen arts, they have perpetually interpenetrated and interacted with a variety of religious/philosophical traditions and social and political movements. There are similarly creative and adaptive processes among the individuals who practise the Zen arts within the course of their own histories. The Zen arts are not indigenous to Scotland, but as aesthetic forms neither do they belong exclusively to 'Japanese Culture'. We could argue for example that they largely belong to a modernist malaise and that they borrowed extensively from European hermeneutic philosophy. They are not, or at least are no longer, exclusively the possession of 'Other Cultures'. Even within Japan there are those who regard them as 'exotic' and 'other', and in Edinburgh they can be made to feel local. As Judith Okely has argued in *'Own or Other Cultures'* (1996), it is not sensible or any longer possible to assume as anthropologists that the exotic begins somewhere else.

My own role in learning *Shorinji Kempo* and bringing back ideas from Japan is part of a century-old tradition of Europeans going to Japan to 'collect' or 'learn' about the arts. Whether for reasons of personal/social prestige, intellectual gratification or spiritual enlightenment, they have showed a sense of fascination with the exotic other. This history of contact has had significant repercussions, some of them quite unintended and unforeseen, on the practice and perception of these arts both within Japan and abroad. This is one reason why Edward Said's notion of 'Orientalism' cannot be applied here, because as far as the Zen arts in Japan are concerned, the power to wholly represent them never emanated from one centre alone. There are relations of power which constrain, but by their number and complexity also open up,

the interpretation of the Zen arts. They raise the question of how independent the aesthetic forms of the Zen arts can be from the discourses which authenticate them and the modern forms which popularise them. But if the sense of the 'authentic' in the Zen arts is constructed as we saw in the three examples above, how do practitioners get on with doing them? How can they appear so immutable? One suggestion that I shall conclude with is that practitioners manage to imagine they are expressing facts not fictions because of the mimetic faculty of the Zen arts. Practitioners act as if their imitations were real, for the power of a copy is that it can share or take power from what is being represented.

Mimesis is the primary mechanism in the relationship between the aesthetic discourse and the participating individual. It also accounts for the role of these discourses and of their mass cultural forms in the construction of a Zen arts identity by treating them as aesthetic forms. What we see in mass cultural forms like visual media is the organised control of mimesis in the modern period (Taussig 1993: 68).

The mimetic faculty, according to Taussig, is always dependent on 'alterity' and the idea of an 'other' world. Otherness, whether as a vanishing Utopian ideal, a nostalgia for a pre-modern past, or a fascination with the exotic, has always been a part of the Zen arts. Mimesis in the history of the Zen arts manifests the shift between Self and Other, so that what at first may appear as a structure of aesthetic form imposed upon the participant will emerge as an expression of the participants' efforts. It is through this mechanism that the Zen arts can be described as, amongst other things, the 'essence of Japanese Culture' or indeed as 'having the crack'. However, mimesis is not a precise mechanism, and what can be represented by the imitation of aesthetic form is not stable because the practitioner who goes to participate in the Zen Arts today is able to explore a variety of ways of being a practitioner. These may be different from, and can even exceed, their expectations and assumptions.

The imitation of aesthetic form allows the practitioner to explore these ideas and images, and can even turn them into a lived reality. Finally, aesthetic forms and their

copies are mixed up with and can be as 'authentic' as the self which creatively imitates and embodies them. Therefore being a Zen arts practitioner is not determined by its aesthetic forms, but through a mimetic relationship with them practitioners are provided with an enchanting and empowering ideal and, given the opportunity, to re-fashion themselves creatively. The point about enchantment is that it is never clear who is doing the enchanting. Is it the practitioner enchanting their own participation (mimetically adapting aesthetic form), or is it the various manifestations of aesthetic form which enchant practitioners into being expressions of them? Practitioners enchant and are enchanted by the allure of aesthetic form just as they represent and re-present an ideal of what it is possible to become.

Oscar Wilde was critical of those who were enchanted by Japanese art, accusing them of 'pure invention'. But even if the Zen arts are an invention and not an aesthetic form creatively imitated, as I have argued, then they are one which has been 'mutually conceived' (Moeran 1998: 226).

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## Glossary

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>aidagarashugi</i>    | 'face to face' interaction                                     |
| <i>aima-na</i>          | 'ambiguous'  |
| <i>aisatsu</i>          | polite forms of address  |
| <i>amae</i>             | 'intimacy' and 'dependency'                                    |
| <i>asobi-no-seishin</i> | popular culture  |
| <i>atemi</i>            | 'strikes'  |
| <i>atemi-go-no-sen</i>  | the 'five points of attack and defence' used in Shorinji Kempo |
| <i>basara</i>           | 'exoticism' and 'ostentation'                                  |
| <i>benrina-koto</i>     | 'convenient things'  |
| <i>budō</i>             | 'martial way'  |
| <i>bugei</i>            | 'martial arts academy'   |
| <i>bujutsu</i>          | 'martial arts'   |
| <i>buke</i>             | 'military aristocrats'   |
| <i>bunbu-fugi</i>       | 'literary and martial arts are not incompatible'               |
| <i>bunbu-ryōdō</i>      | 'Both ways in letters and the martial'                         |
| <i>bunmei-kaika</i>     | 'civilisation and enlightenment'                               |
| <i>bunka-kokka</i>      | 'national culture'   |
| <i>bunka-minzoku</i>    | 'culture folk'   |
| <i>bunka-no-jidai</i>   | 'age of culture'   |
| <i>bunka-no-jūsōsei</i> | 'cultural layeredness'   |
| <i>bunka-shakai</i>     | 'cultural communities'   |
| <i>busen</i>            | 'academy' for martial arts                                     |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>bushi</i>                | ‘warrior’   |
| <i>bushidō</i>              | ‘way of the warrior’  |
| <i>chadō</i>                | ‘way of tea’  |
| <i>chajin</i>               | ‘tea person’  |
| <i>chanoyu</i>              | ‘tea ceremony’  |
| <i>chantō</i>               | ‘neatly’, ‘properly’  |
| <i>chashitsu</i>            | ‘tea room’  |
| <i>chigai-dana</i>          | ‘staggered shelves’   |
| <i>chijoku</i>              | ‘dishonour’   |
| <i>chudan-gamae</i>         | ‘middle stance’   |
| <i>chūkō-ippō</i>           | ‘loyalty to sovereign and loyalty to parents<br>are one in essence’ |
| <i>chūryū-ishiki</i>        | ‘middle class consciousness’  |
| <i>dai-nippon-butokukai</i> | ‘Great Japan martial virtues association’                           |
| <i>daisu</i>                | utensil stand   |
| <i>dan</i>                  | senior rank in the Zen Arts   |
| <i>dentō-tekina</i>         | ‘traditional’   |
| <i>depāto</i>               | ‘department store’  |
| <i>deshi</i>                | ‘student’   |
| <i>dō</i>                   | a spiritual ‘way’   |
| <i>dōbōshu</i>              | ‘companions’, ‘connoisseurs’  |
| <i>dogi</i>                 | uniform worn in martial arts  |
| <i>dōjō</i>                 | ‘training place’  |
| <i>dokun</i>                | ‘oath’ recited during Shorinji Kempo<br>training                    |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>dōraku</i>          | ‘ways of fun’   |
| <i>doryoku</i>         | ‘effort’  |
| <i>dōzoku</i>          | ‘household’   |
| <i>enryo</i>           | ‘to abjure’   |
| <i>fukan zen-sōden</i> | ‘limited transmission’  |
| <i>furui</i>           | ‘old’   |
| <i>fūzoku</i>          | ‘manners’ and ‘customs’   |
| <i>gakkai</i>          | ‘academies’   |
| <i>gakkō</i>           | ‘schools’   |
| <i>gaku</i>            | ‘to study’  |
| <i>gambaru</i>         | ‘endure’, ‘to bear’   |
| <i>gasshō-rei</i>      | a ‘salute’ or gesture of respect  |
| <i>geidō</i>           | ‘artistic way’  |
| <i>geijitsu</i>        | the ‘arts’  |
| <i>geijitsuka</i>      | an ‘artist’   |
| <i>geimei</i>          | artist’s name   |
| <i>genki</i>           | ‘enthusiasm’  |
| <i>giri</i>            | ‘obligation’  |
| <i>gōho</i>            | ‘hard techniques’   |
| <i>goraku</i>          | activities for ‘entertainment’ and<br>‘amusement’                           |
| <i>gyō</i>             | method of strengthening mind and body                                       |
| <i>ha</i>              | one of the three stages in the Buddhist<br>theory of learning the Zen Arts. |
| <i>haji</i>            | ‘shame’   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>hara</i>             | ‘belly’   |
| <i>haragei</i>          | the ‘unspoken way’                                |
| <i>hazukashii</i>       | ‘embarrassment’                                   |
| <i>heijoshin</i>        | ‘calm mind’                                       |
| <i>hidden</i>           | secret information passed from master to disciple |
| <i>honji-suijaku</i>    | ‘flowing traces’                                  |
| <i>hontō-no-waza</i>    | the ‘real’ technique                              |
| <i>hōtō-eiji</i>        | ‘profligate age’                                  |
| <i>iemoto</i>           | patriarchal system of organisation                |
| <i>igei</i>             | traditional cultural forms                        |
| <i>iji</i>              | ‘pride’   |
| <i>ikebana</i>          | the art of flower arranging                       |
| <i>iki</i>              | Edo period aesthetic ‘style’                      |
| <i>ishin-denshin</i>    | transmitting ideas from ‘mind to mind’            |
| <i>isshokenmei</i>      | give your ‘best effort’                           |
| <i>jaku</i>             | ‘tranquility’                                     |
| <i>jissenteiki-kufū</i> | ‘doctrines realised through practice’             |
| <i>ji</i>               | ‘principle’                                       |
| <i>jitsu</i>            | ‘strong points’                                   |
| <i>jōdo-shū</i>         | ‘pure land’ form of Buddhism                      |
| <i>jōgyō-zanmai</i>     | ‘continual walking’                               |
| <i>jōmin</i>            | ‘abiding folk’                                    |
| <i>jōza-zanmai</i>      | ‘continual sitting’                               |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>jūdō</i>             | the 'soft way'   |
| <i>jūho</i>             | 'soft techniques'                                      |
| <i>juku</i>             | cram school  |
| <i>junsui-keiken</i>    | 'pure experience'                                      |
| <i>kadō</i>             | 'way of poetry'  |
| <i>kagite-shuhō</i>     | 'defensive stance'                                     |
| <i>kaihōgyō</i>         | 'endurance walking over mountains'                     |
| <i>kaiseki</i>          | the formal meal which accompanies a full tea gathering |
| <i>kaisha</i>           | 'company', 'business'                                  |
| <i>kaisho</i>           | 'banqueting chamber'                                   |
| <i>akejija/kakemono</i> | the long scroll 'hung' or 'suspended' in the tea room  |
| <i>kan-wa-kokoro</i>    | 'seeing with the heart'                                |
| <i>kanzen-sōden</i>     | 'complete transmission'                                |
| <i>karada-de-oboeru</i> | 'remembering with the body'                            |
| <i>karadagoto</i>       | to do something with 'body and soul'                   |
| <i>karamono</i>         | 'Chinese things'                                       |
| <i>karatedō</i>         | 'way of the empty hand'                                |
| <i>karuchā-centā</i>    | 'culture centre'                                       |
| <i>kasuo-kotan</i>      | 'plainness and refined simplicity'                     |
| <i>kata/katachi</i>     | 'form' or 'style'                                      |
| <i>kata-de-hairu</i>    | 'enter through form'                                   |
| <i>kei</i>              | 'respect'  |
| <i>keigo</i>            | 'respectful', 'honorific' language                     |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>keiken</i>          | ‘experience’                                |
| <i>keiko</i>           | ‘practice’                                  |
| <i>keiko ba</i>        | ‘practice place’                            |
| <i>kendo</i>           | ‘way of sword’                              |
| <i>ken-zen-ichinyō</i> | discipline ‘mind and body’                  |
| <i>ki</i>              | ‘psycho-physical energy’                    |
| <i>kiai</i>            | guttural shout expressing ki energy         |
| <i>ki-hō</i>           | union between two ki’s                      |
| <i>kibishii</i>        | ‘strict’                                    |
| <i>kireena</i>         | ‘beautiful’                                 |
| <i>kissaten</i>        | coffee shop                                 |
| <i>kōan</i>            | paradoxical sayings used in Zen practice    |
| <i>kodai-bukkyō</i>    | ancient buddhism                            |
| <i>kōgi</i>            | ‘theory of public good’                     |
| <i>koha</i>            | generic folk hero characterised by stoicism |
| <i>kojinshugi</i>      | ‘selfishness’                               |
| <i>kokoro</i>          | ‘mind’, ‘heart’                             |
| <i>kokoro-no-sōji</i>  | ‘cleaning the spirit’                       |
| <i>kokugaku</i>        | ‘theory of national learning’               |
| <i>kokumin</i>         | ‘statish people’                            |
| <i>kokusaika</i>       | ‘theory of internationalism’                |
| <i>kokusui</i>         | ‘essence of the state’                      |
| <i>kokusui-hōzan</i>   | ‘preservation of the national essence’      |



|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>kokutai</i>        | ‘theory of national polity’                                       |
| <i>kominkan</i>       | ‘community centre’  |
| <i>kongo-zen</i>      | ‘diamond Zen’   |
| <i>konjō</i>          | ‘guts’  |
| <i>koreika-shakai</i> | ‘ageing society’  |
| <i>kosei</i>          | ‘individuality’   |
| <i>kote-nuki</i>      | ‘wrist release’   |
| <i>kotodama</i>       | ‘the spirit of words’   |
| <i>kōzoku</i>         | court aristocrats   |
| <i>kurō</i>           | ‘suffering’   |
| <i>kyakka-shōkō</i>   | Zen saying - ‘having a spotlight on your foot’                    |
| <i>kyō</i>            | ‘weak points’   |
| <i>kyōkai</i>         | ‘association’   |
| <i>kyōyō</i>          | ‘cultured’  |
| <i>kyōyō-shugi</i>    | philosophical movement to do with the virtues of self-cultivation |
| <i>kyomu</i>          | ‘emptiness’   |
| <i>kyū</i>            | junior grade in the ranking system of the Zen Arts                |
| <i>kyūdō</i>          | the ‘way of archery’  |
| <i>kyūkei</i>         | rest period   |
| <i>ma</i>             | presencing through ‘spatial/temporal absences’                    |
| <i>manabu</i>         | ‘imitation’ and ‘repetition’                                      |
| <i>majimena</i>       | ‘serious’   |

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|--------------------------|--|
| <i>manga</i>             | comics   |
| <i>manji</i>             | Buddhist symbol  |
| <i>mārga</i>             | spiritual 'path' or 'way'  |
| <i>meibutsu</i>          | 'famous objects'   |
| <i>menboku</i>           | 'face'   |
| <i>mezurashii</i>        | 'rare', 'precious'   |
| <i>michi</i>             | spiritual 'path' or 'way'  |
| <i>minari-kan</i>        | period of 'learning through watching'  |
| <i>minzoku-gaku</i>      | ethnology  |
| <i>minzoku-shugi</i>     | ethnic nationalism   |
| <i>miyabi</i>            | 'courtliness', 'refinement'  |
| <i>modān-seikatsu</i>    | 'modern living'  |
| <i>mondai</i>            | 'problems'   |
| <i>mono no aware</i>     | the 'pathos of things'   |
| <i>mu</i>                | 'nothingness'  |
| <i>muhinshu</i>          | state of mind required of guests at tea ceremony, characterised as 'nothingness' |
| <i>mukiteiteki-kitei</i> | 'rules without rules'  |
| <i>munen-musō</i>        | 'no-thought', 'no-image'   |
| <i>mushanokoji</i>       | one of the three schools of the tea ceremony                                     |
| <i>mushin</i>            | 'no-mind'  |
| <i>myōyō</i>             | 'skill'  |
| <i>na</i>                | 'name'   |
| <i>nateri</i>            | 'name taking'  |
| <i>natsukashisa</i>      | 'nostalgia'  |

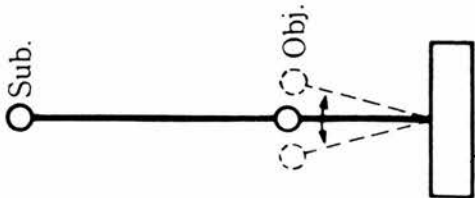
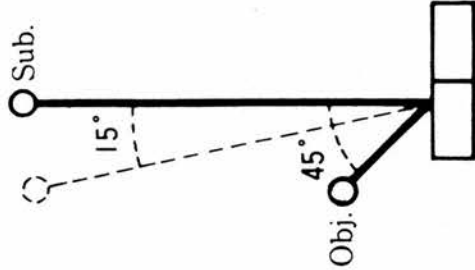
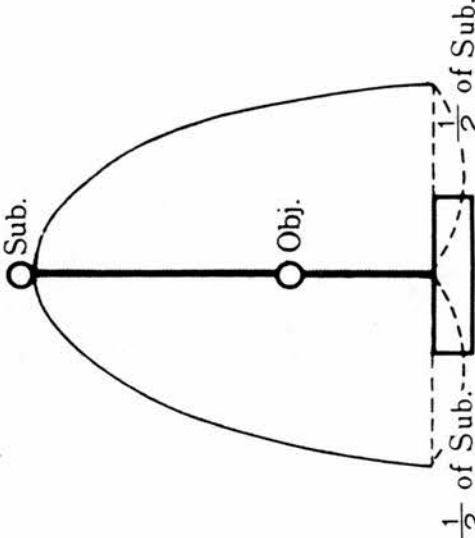
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|-------------------------|--|
| <i>nihirisuto</i>       | 'nihilist'   |
| <i>nihonjiron</i>       | 'theory of Japaneseness'   |
| <i>nihonshugi</i>       | 'ethnic nationalism', 'Japanism'   |
| <i>ninjō</i>            | 'human feelings'   |
| <i>nō/nogaku</i>        | a style of theatre   |
| <i>nostaruji-kōkoku</i> | 'nostalgic advertisements'   |
| <i>nostaruji-shōhin</i> | 'nostalgic products'   |
| <i>nyoi</i>             | Buddhist guardian figure   |
| <i>nyumonshiki</i>      | 'entrance ceremony'  |
| <i>obi</i>              | 'belt'   |
| <i>oga swara-ryu</i>    | school of martial arts in Edo period                                       |
| <i>okashii</i>          | sweets served during tea ceremony  |
| <i>okeikogoto</i>       | 'aesthetic pursuits'   |
| <i>omote-senke</i>      | one of three schools of tea ceremony                                       |
| <i>onna-no-koto</i>     | 'feminine, 'womanly' things  |
| <i>onnarashii</i>       | 'feminine', 'womanly'  |
| <i>origami</i>          | 'technique of paper folding'   |
| <i>purei</i>            | 'play'   |
| <i>raifu-cosu</i>       | 'life course'  |
| <i>ramendō</i>          | the 'way of noodles'   |
| <i>randoori</i>         | 'free fighting'  |
| <i>rangaku</i>          | a body of knowledge based on contact with Dutch traders in the Edo period. |
| <i>reigi</i>            | code of physical and moral conduct   |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>reigi-sahō</i>     | ‘good manners’   |
| <i>reja</i>           | ‘leisure’  |
| <i>renga</i>          | a style of poetry  |
| <i>ri</i>             | ‘creativity’ - one of the three stages in the Buddhist theory of learning the Zen Arts |
| <i>rinzai zen</i>     | one of two main schools of Zen practice  |
| <i>ryōsai-kenbo</i>   | ‘good wife’, and ‘wise mother’   |
| <i>sabi</i>           | ‘rusticity’  |
| <i>samadhi</i>        | ‘meditation in motion’   |
| <i>samu</i>           | ‘cleaning’   |
| <i>satori</i>         | ‘enlightenment’  |
| <i>sedai</i>          | generation cohorts   |
| <i>sei</i>            | ‘purity’   |
| <i>seikatsu</i>       | ‘life style’   |
| <i>seikyōsha</i>      | society for political education  |
| <i>seishin</i>        | ‘spirit’   |
| <i>seishin-kyōiku</i> | ‘spiritual education’  |
| <i>seishin-shugi</i>  | ‘victory of spirit over material things’   |
| <i>seken</i>          | ‘community’  |
| <i>sekentai</i>       | ones appearance in the world   |
| <i>seken-banashi</i>  | ‘gossip’   |
| <i>sempai</i>         | ‘senior’   |
| <i>sensei</i>         | ‘master’, ‘teacher’  |
| <i>shachō</i>         | managing director  |
| <i>shajitsu</i>       | ‘capturing reality’  |

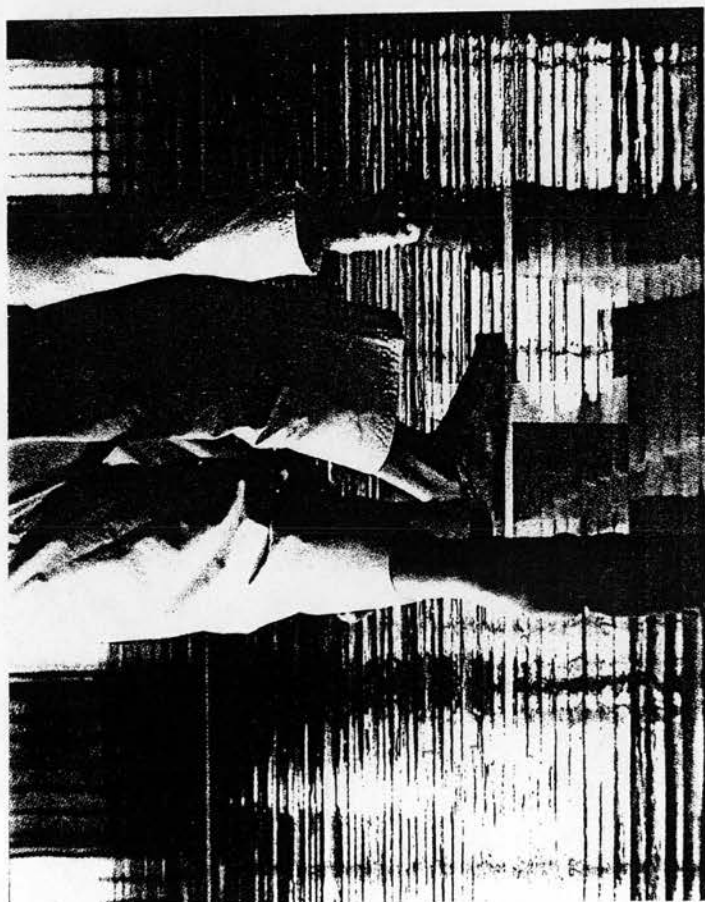
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| <i>shakai-kyoiku</i>     | ‘social education’   |
| <i>shashin</i>           | ‘picture’, lit. ‘depicting authenticity’                                 |
| <i>shinjin-datsuraku</i> | ‘casting off the body and mind’  |
| <i>shinjin rui</i>       | the ‘new Japanese’ of the 1980s  |
| <i>shinju-funi</i>       | ‘Shinto and Confucianism are one’  |
| <i>shintai-kankaku</i>   | ‘sensations of the body’   |
| <i>shinkō-shūkyō</i>     | ‘new religions’  |
| <i>shin-nihonjin</i>     | the ‘new Japanese’ of the 1980’s   |
| <i>shinshin-ichinyo</i>  | ‘body mind oneness’  |
| <i>shōdō</i>             | ‘way of calligraphy’   |
| <i>shōjin ryōri</i>      | the special vegetarian cooking style of the Buddhist temple              |
| <i>Shorinji-Kempo</i>    | ‘fist way of the shaolin temple’   |
| <i>shū</i>               | one of the three stages in the Buddhist theory of learning the Zen Arts. |
| <i>shūdan-seikatsu</i>   | ‘group life style’   |
| <i>shugyō</i>            | methods of self cultivation  |
| <i>shumi</i>             | hobby  |
| <i>shumi-no-ii</i>       | ‘distinction’, ‘taste’   |
| <i>sokushin-jōbutsu</i>  | ‘enlightenment with this very body’                                      |
| <i>sonnō-jōi</i>         | ‘revere the emperor and expel the barbarian’                             |
| <i>soto</i>              | ‘outside’  |
| <i>stoicizumu</i>        | ‘stoicism’   |
| <i>tabi</i>              | ‘pilgrimage’   |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>taiken</i>         | the 'experience' of testing the body           |
| <i>taiko</i>          | drum   |
| <i>taishu-geinō</i>   | 'popular performing arts'                      |
| <i>temae</i>          | specific procedures related to tea preparation |
| <i>tennō-shugi</i>    | emperor system                                 |
| <i>tokonoma</i>       | 'alcove'                                       |
| <i>tokubetsuna</i>    | 'special'                                      |
| <i>tori-awase</i>     | creative skill in tea                          |
| <i>tōyōteki-mu</i>    | 'oriental nothingness'                         |
| <i>uchi</i>           | 'inside'                                       |
| <i>undoteki-meisu</i> | 'meditation in motion'                         |
| <i>ura senke</i>      | one of three schools of tea ceremony           |
| <i>utsukushii</i>     | 'beautiful'                                    |
| <i>wa</i>             | 'harmony'                                      |
| <i>wabi</i>           | 'poverty'                                      |
| <i>wabi-cha</i>       | 'poverty tea'                                  |
| <i>waka</i>           | style of poetry                                |
| <i>waza</i>           | 'skill'  |
| <i>waza-o-tsukeru</i> | attach techniques to body                      |
| <i>yasashii</i>       | 'gentle', 'tender'                             |
| <i>yūgen/yugei</i>    | 'profundity', 'remoteness'                     |
| <i>yōjōhan</i>        | four and one half mat tearoom                  |
| <i>yuga-enrei</i>     | 'elegant' and 'sensuously beautiful'           |
| <i>zen-cha-ichimi</i> | 'Zen and tea are one'                          |



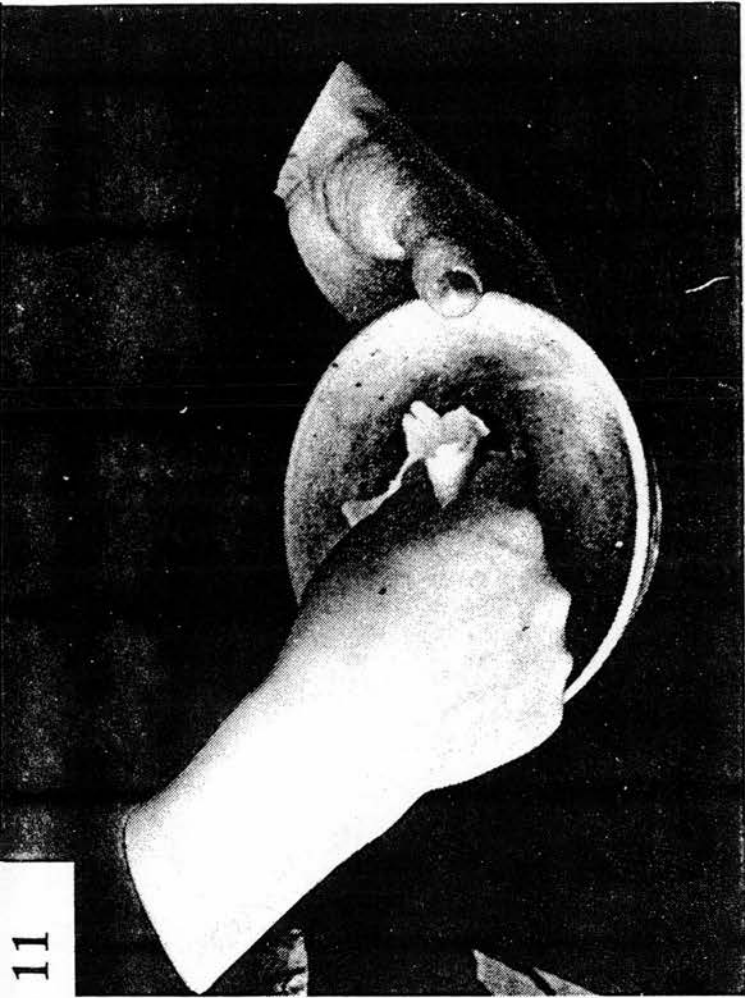
| FRONT VIEW   | SIDE VIEW  | THE RANGE OF FILLERS<br>(FRONT VIEW)   |
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# まんが茶会入門

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